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of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

FIRST QUARTER - 1954

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In view of the Third Jubilee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, this special number focusses on the origins of Bible Society work and the problems and opportunities confronting it to-day.

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Editorial

THE British and Foreign Bible Society celebrates its Third Jubilee in a few weeks time. First and foremost we wish here to join with the Society's many friends all over the world in expressing our admiration and gratitude for 150 years of devoted, inspired and inspiring work, and our warm wishes for the Society as it pursues, under God's guidance, the tasks that lie ahead.

Great things have been accomplished by this Society and there is almost no country in the world which has not benefitted from its activity at some time or other. The Rev. A. H. Wilkinson's article allows us just a glimpse of this manifold and world-wide development. Indeed, the B.F.B.S. was not the first institution in the world dedicated to the production and distribution of the Scriptures at a low price. But the originality (as well as the secret of its expansion) of the B.F.B.S. lies in the missionary spirit which inspired its leaders from the beginning of its existence and which, for example, led them to devote the main part of the Society's annual budget to work overseas, while the home concern only occupied an unselfish fraction of its service. In this way the B.F.B.S. has established a pattern, and since 1804 a Bible Society worthy of the name has always felt driven to pursue a double objective—national and foreign, at home and abroad. Indeed full maturity is only attained in this field when the foreign concern appears just as imperative and urgent as the home concern. Bishop Berggrav shows in a vivid way how his own Bible Society—the Norwegian—has started its copernican revolution. The 1954 celebration therefore is more than the 150th anniversary of the founding of the B.F.B.S., for more was at stake in 1804 than the creation of a Society : a movement was started ; a new type of missionary work was inaugurated ; a new ministry, embryonic until that time in the Church, received form and function.

The General Secretaries of the B.F.B.S., the Rev. W. J. Platt and Dr. N. J. Cockburn, have outlined some features of Bible Society work and some of the problems that Bible Societies will have to face in the future. These comments are of particular value for they remind us that in facing its task and working on new policies, the B.F.B.S. is not only aware that many other Societies are also engaged in the same field of work but it is also desirous of sharing as widely as possible with others, in a fellowship of thought and action, the world-wide ministry of circulating the Scriptures.

Whoever glances through the early reports of the B.F.B.S. cannot but be struck by the spirit of true ecumenicity and true international fellowship which prevail in all the deliberations and decisions of the Committee of the Society. The circumstances—so ably described by Mr. Hennell—which surrounded and conditioned to some extent the foundation of the B.F.B.S., were matched by very similar conditions on the Continent—with the difference that continental Europe was tremendously impoverished. With the beginning of a century a new era had dawned on both sides of the Channel, and for some years, in spite of the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath, the world was spiritually one. For a period of twenty years Bible Societies and Auxiliary Bible Societies sprang up everywhere—in America, in Europe, in the white settlements in the West Indies, in India, here and there in Africa and in the isles of the Pacific—devoting themselves to the task of meeting the great dearth of Scriptures in their own country. But their eyes began to open to

the missionary challenge and the following statement of one of the directors of the Basle Bible Society in 1821 is symptomatic of this evolution and full of significance : " While the Continental Bible Societies are forming themselves into permanent national institutions, and direct their primary attention to the regular supply of the ordinary wants of their own vicinity, they begin to perceive more and more clearly the duty of paying attention to the heathen world also, to which the missionary efforts now being made so extensively will prepare the way." Even Roman Catholics and Orthodox joined at that time in the great movement of Bible distribution originated by the Bible Societies, and one is amazed to see, for example, the stupendous achievements of the Bible Society of Russia until it was suspended by the Czar Nicholas in 1826, shortly after his accession to the throne.

Unfortunately ten years after the Conference of Vienna the dislocation of Europe, indeed of the western world, had already begun. The Bible Societies were not spared. The spirit of fellowship cooled off ; horizons contracted ; the sense of oneness of the task and of interdependence in accomplishing it faded or vanished ; the controversy over the apocrypha was raging. Popes issued their pronouncements against the Bible Societies and their work. Orthodox Patriarchs and Metropolitans disassociated themselves from or opposed the activity of the Bible Societies. For over fifty years, indeed almost until the beginning of the present century, the task was now discharged by the Bible Societies working in isolation from one another and the world-wide vision was retained by only a few.

To-day, however, the forthcoming Jubilee will be celebrated in a restored fellowship. During the past half century, under the pressure of events and thanks to the growth of ecumenical consciousness, the former isolationism of the Bible Societies is on the decline. The growing sense of need for co-ordination and co-operation led to the creation of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, which in a sense reincarnates, as it were, that spirit of togetherness which was so characteristic of the early days of the Bible Society movement. In forming the U.B.S. the Bible Societies of the world have created an instrument which should enable them again to enrich each other, encourage each other, support each other in the discharge of their common, global responsibility.

That task is one ; it belongs to all ; and it offers the same challenge to all. Thus in celebrating the Third Jubilee of the member who first received the vision, shared it with others and maintained it faithfully before the eyes of all for so many years, we are all recalled at the same time to our own responsibility in the common task and ministry. We are all sharers and partakers in that great work that the B.F.B.S. first assumed. In our regained unity let us pledge ourselves to maintain and strengthen the ties of this fellowship and, together, with a renewed vision of our missionary service, assume it for the glory of God and the furtherance of His Kingdom.

Correction

In Bulletin No. 16 (page 30) Bible Society work in Somaliland was incorrectly stated to be in the hands of a joint agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society. This work, like that in Ethiopia and Aden, is the responsibility of the B.F.B.S. alone.

WHY BIBLE SOCIETIES?

A discussion in catechism form

by N. J. COCKBURN.

What is the meaning of the work of the Bible Societies in relation to Christendom as a whole?

IN the last 200 years, world population has risen from 728,000,000 to 2,449,000,000. Christian population has expanded from 145,000,000 to possibly 775,000,000. This great Christian expansion is due to European migration and the combined efforts of Christian missionaries. Half of this missionary expansion has been achieved by Protestant missions, who have used the Bible produced by the Bible Societies as their *greatest instrument of evangelisation.* The Bible has been effective.

During this same period, however, the quality of Christian belief and action in Europe has gradually declined, so that much Christian society stands in need of renewed evangelisation. The Bible Societies still stand ready to supply the Scriptures to meet the need inside Europe as well as abroad. They maintain that individual acquaintance with the basic texts of the Christian religion remains the surest foundation for Christian development in the civilisations of the future.

In the last 150 years the Bible Societies have enriched Christendom to the extent of 1,200,000,000—1,300,000,000 copies of the Scriptures in whole and in part, printed in over a thousand languages.

How is it that the Bible, always present in the Church, has not, till the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, achieved through the Bible Societies a world impact?

This is the kind of question which would require a book to answer it adequately. The main factors involved, however, are as follows. Christian history advances through a series of theological climates. The early Church, for instance, was largely occupied with Christology. The Mediaeval Church was mainly interested in the philosophical presentation of the Faith as a whole. The Reformation was concerned with reforming the pattern of Christendom on Biblical foundations. One of the principles which influenced the sixteenth century Reformers was that of the individual's 'immediate' access to the authoritative sources of the Faith. Bible reading became 'normal' for Christians. It took another 250 years, however, for it to become actually possible and regular.

Three factors combining together resulted in the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. The first was the dynamic of the industrial revolution which created the wealth in the hands of a few who happened to be Christians with a world outlook. The second factor was the abiding power and drive in the evangelical revival associated with the name of John Wesley through extending beyond Methodism. The third factor was the expansion of the British Empire, which took over from Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and France, the leadership in charting the non-Western world.

What use of the Bible has been made by Churches apart from that special wide scale distribution of Bibles achieved by the Bible Societies?

This is a good question, reminding us that the Bible is loved and used by Orthodox and Roman Catholics, as well as by Protestants. Only the use is different. In many instances, the Protestant Churches themselves publish

and circulate the Scriptures for their own local needs. In most cases, however, the use they make of the Bible is limited to theological and liturgical or devotional purposes. All the statements of faith which characterise the various churches claim to be derived from or to be consistent with the Bible. All the regular Church Services through which the Sacraments are dispensed or the Word preached are claimed to be related to the Bible and indeed their language is mainly drawn therefrom. What the Bible Societies have added to these regular uses is simply the production of Bibles in quantities sufficient for the newer needs of unparalleled missionary advance and to supply the demand for individual study and devotional use of a private nature.

Is the Bible Society movement restricted to Protestant Christianity only?

A Bible Society is an association of Christian people freely banded together for the achievement of one single object, the publication and circulation of the Christian Scriptures. Though they exist to serve the churches and do this most faithfully at home and through the missionary societies, they are not strictly speaking under the control of the churches. They reserve the right, for instance, to appoint and pay for their own distributors called colporteurs, who are a kind of a ' free lance ' missionary. In this strict sense Bible Societies are limited to Protestant Christianity.

Nonetheless, during the last 150 years, a movement resembling the Bible Society movement, has begun to take shape inside the Roman Catholic Church. Though it is strictly controlled by the Church, it translated the Scriptures into the vernaculars of different countries. Three Papal Encyclicals have encouraged Bible reading by the laity in 1893, 1920 and 1943. In France the Scriptures to-day are used as evangelical instruments by Roman Catholic clergy. In Belgium and Austria the Bible movement is a movement among the people and not merely encouraged by the Church hierarchy.

Why do the Bible Societies distribute Bibles strictly " without note or comment"?

If one thinks it out Bible and Church ought ever to be married, as it were, and not divorced. They belong to one another and explain each other. This suggests the fundamental rightness of the Church explaining or interpreting the Bible and issuing it with ' notes and comments.' In the early Church, the great commentaries of the Fathers attempted to achieve this. At the Reformation something similar took place among the Reformers.

When the Bible Society was founded in London in 1804, it confronted a situation, however, in which the divisions of the churches and their disagreement over Biblical interpretation forced them to adopt a policy. That policy was to issue only the text of Scripture about which there could be no argument. Though in recent years the Ecumenical Movement has created a situation in which the churches are definitely closer together, there is still insufficient agreement to justify any radical change in Bible Society policy to publish " without note or comment." That must still be left to individual churches.

Is there a Biblical Renaissance in sight?

Renaissance implies a rebirth after a time of death or at least quiescence. It cannot be said that knowledge of the Bible has died out among Christian nations. It is true, however, that in some of them it can scarcely be said to have ever been effectively born as far as the laity are concerned. In other countries, and I must number my own country, Britain, among such, lay familiarity with the Bible has suffered an eclipse. There are, however, signs of a new awakening to the Bible. It may be a small indication but it is

significant, that in connection with the recent coronation in Great Britain the Bible Society published over 600,000 copies of the Bible or New Testament as against 13,000 copies issued for the coronation of His late Majesty, King George VI in 1937.

In theological circles in all churches there is a movement back to the Bible as the source and standard of true faith and belief. The time may not be far distant when the separated churches will see a way of rapprochement based on common understanding of the Scriptures they unite in accepting.

That phase in recent thought associated with the criticism of the Bible has passed and left the Bible vindicated and established. There can, however, be no progress in reclaiming the mass of lapsed laity who ignorantly think that the Bible has been dethroned, until clear intellectual defence of the Bible has penetrated their minds and reassured them in faith.

What do the achievements of the Bible Societies during the last 150 *years really add up to?*

In the profoundest sense God only is the Judge of the achievement of any human association or society. We may, however, suggest the following features of the work of the Bible Societies as constituting the real value.

Spiritually, the world has been flooded with the most sacred religious Scriptures.

Culturally, it has been enriched with the highest form and profoundest quality of literature.

Ethically, it has been cleansed by a flow of moral teaching which challenges that which is most eternal and most basic in Man.

Humanly, it has been given the only mirror which reveals at once its actual debasement and its true dignity.

Divinely, it has been offered the saving knowledge of the nature of the One true God, the record of His Creative and Redemptive Acts in both Eternity and History and assurance of the final destiny of Man.

These achievements challenge humbly but incisively much that is false in religion, many things which are a scandal in literature, some things which make nonsense of morality, all things which affect human life under the aspect of eternity.

What may the Bible Societies achieve in the future?

In some ways this is the most interesting of the questions. It is also the hardest to answer. It is not given to human beings to foretell the future. Working, however, on the basis of the rhythms and patterns which on the large scale are discernible in history, we may hazard the following.

Christianity appears to advance and retreat in such a manner that never yet has any retreat been greater than the preceeding advance. Consequently, if you take a large enough view of history it is always ultimately advancing. At present it is in the midst of a century of retreat. It is not difficult to see in world communism the major external foe as we can see in world secularism the major internal foe. It may take fifty years of struggle with communism before the ideological initiative passes back to Christianity. It will take fully that time before the confusion and mists of interior doubts in the hearts of so many nominal Christians give way to the light of a new Age of Faith. We

can, however, be sure that that new dawn will come. Strange as it may sound materialism will be overcome by science before the significance of religion is rediscovered by the many who have lapsed. In all this path into the better future the Bible Societies have an important part to play. It may be that the patient sowing of the Christian Scriptures in different civilisations, cultures and national traditions will become the determining factor. The Bible is never dead. It is always living like a flame, like a river, like a Spirit. Behind the Bible is God.

Turning our eyes from the exterior field of the world into which the Church must ever pour herself evangelistically, we must look inwards into the Church and see what vocation exists there for the Bible Societies.

Looking into the Church, none can deny that along with the mystical insight into how the Church reaches into Eternity and is ever possessing the victory achieved by Christ in His Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection, we see at the same time that the Church is tragically crippled here on earth by her divisions.

In the next fifty years we may see the Bible Societies used as part of that Ecumenical Movement, giving hope, if not actually achieving a solution to the problem of division. There is a growing measure of mutual understanding between Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians in certain areas of disagreement. There is not yet apparent any solution but in the Bible lie the final principles to which both Roman Catholic and Protestant appeal. At least we can unite in saying, Nearer the Bible nearer to one another.

With the Orthodox Churches the Bible Societies have long possessed cordial relations. Many translation committees are composed entirely of Orthodox members. At present Orthodoxy is divided and distressed by the attack of communism more perhaps than any other Christian Communion, Rome included. When the travail of that attack has somewhat passed, we shall find perhaps a greatly increased willingness to forward the work of Bible distribution in Orthodox lands.

Finally, apart from the attempt to see the future by studying the pattern of the past, we must remember that the Bible is ever in the Hand of God, is the instrument of His conversion of individuals, as it is the instrument of His chastisement and instruction of Churches, of His Judgment of and Mercy towards the whole world.

THE BIBLE SOCIETIES TODAY AND TOMORROW

by W. J. Platt

THE year 1954 marks the one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of an event which history may well judge to have been epoch-making. Largely because of it the source book of the Christian religion—the Bible—has become the most widely translated book in history. Because of it, even in this "Age of Print," more copies of the Christian Gospel are actually available—even to the remotest tribes and nations—than of any other publication. Most important of all, because of it the basic literature of Christianity to-day moulds opinions, forms moral judgments and stimulates hope amongst millions of ordinary people right across the world. Examples of this extraordinary impact of the Gospel upon our generation are well known. Mahatma Gandhi became a regular reader of its pages and was greatly influenced thereby in his policies.

A recent issue of the Madras " *Guardian* " said of India : " The last 100 years or more have seen the acceptance of many Christian principles as the basis of healthy standards in public life. We are all converts—all of us, who have succumbed to the forces of Christian love and faith." Or look at China. As the Communist forces approached Shanghai, the National Church Council, meeting there, sent out a message to local churches containing a list of the benefits which had come to China through the Christian religion, benefits in education, medicine, books, care for women and children, and regard for the " working man " in order, said the message, " to urge the Church to-day to yet greater effort in positive accord with the Christian Gospel." Again, in Equatorial Africa, last year, Scriptures to the value of £50,000 were bought and it can safely be said that, in this area, which 150 years ago had no written language, the first book printed in the hundreds of languages spoken there is invariably the Christian Gospel.

Harnessing New Forces

In celebrating the Third Jubilee of the beginnings of this world-wide activity, the historical setting of which is described elsewhere in this issue, we ought therefore to remind ourselves of the conceptions which brought it into being and to ask ourselves : " What of to-morrow ? " At the beginning of the nineteenth century a wave of spiritual revival and a desire for religious action was passing through Britain—energised by a return to what was called " Scriptural holiness." A new piety, with its common bond in the Bible, gradually deepened throughout the land. It was in this atmosphere that the British and Foreign Bible Society came to birth in 1804, and had as its one aim : " the wider circulation of Holy Scripture."

It was not long therefore before Steinkopff, one of its early Secretaries, was travelling from London around Europe to plant there the idea of indigenous Bible Societies. To-day, throughout the world, there are twenty-four National Bible Societies engaged in co-operative planning and joint work for the Bibling of the world. What, we may ask, were the basic ideas of our forefathers in their deep concern about the Bible and the Society they founded for its propagation ?

Our Basic Ideas

First, there was the need for *universality* expressed in the epoch-making query of Joseph Hughes concerning the Book : " Why not for the World ? " These words presented a challenge for both world circulation and world translation and were in line with general trends in the thinking of Britain at that time. All the Bible Societies have felt, of course, that it is a primary duty to see that their homelands are adequately provided with the Scriptures, but, due to many causes (some historical or geographical and some theological) not all of us have kept our eyes on the frontiers of the world in remembering that it is the birthright of every man for whom Christ died to know the Truth of the Gospel. This was undoubtedly due in part to the specialisation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in overseas work and was perhaps a tribute to it. But to-day, with the birth of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, new horizons for world service are opening up before many Societies and for this we thank God and take courage. And courage will be needed, not only in Societies taking up new overseas tasks but also in the older Societies themselves which, in founding the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES gave hope to others that they might share in world responsibilities. Already, in rapidly developing lands such as India, Brazil, Japan, China, enormous responsibilities have been

" handed over " to young indigenous Societies. And as this kind of progress continues the British and Foreign Bible Society will not be found lacking in generosity for well conceived schemes which are helpful to the spread of the Word.

Again, in 1804 with a viewpoint remarkable at that time, the B.F.B.S. was founded on the basis of the widest *ecumenical co-operation* possible in Britain and actually became a pioneer in Christian joint action. With a statesmanship and insight, typical rather of the Christian layman, its constitution placed the government of the Society, in fixed proportions, squarely upon the shoulders of Anglicans and Free Churchmen who were publicly elected at an Annual Meeting. These ideas spread and local committees or Auxiliaries were elected on ecumenical lines throughout Britain. In some countries where Bible Societies have taken root conditions are, of course, different. One church may more or less dominate the religious life of the national community, and Bible Society work can, of course, be carried on as the expression of the interest of one church alone, minority churches being left without a voice in support and direction. We ought not to overlook the fact, however, that these were not the early conceptions of our Founders for the Bible is the possession of all Christian communions. In Britian and the Dominions the British and Foreign Bible Society possibly did more during the nineteenth century to foster fellowship amongst Christians of all denominations than any other organisation.

Our Work Rooted in the Local Churches

Future developments will not only concern the expansion of our co-operative service to the Church in all the world, but will most certainly involve careful study of the internal development in our several organisations. Methods adopted for the raising of our funds, for example, ought, perhaps, to be carefully examined, though here our respective organisations vary. Some Societies rely entirely on the free gifts of the churches by collections or denominational quotas ; others feel that a measure of their support can be procured by a profit made on Scriptures for "home consumption" in order that versions in foreign tongues might benefit. Others, again, feel that where Bible Society buildings are necessary, a measure of investment in real estate is beneficial and that revenue collected from rentable office space, for example, need not only cover local property commitments but ought also to afford help in local Bible production and distribution. Whatever our methods, in all such considerations, it surely must remain the aim of Bible Societies to retain the sound principle that their work must be rooted in the day to day conviction, the service and the prayers of living members of the Christian churches. Indeed, it is in the interest of the Societies themselves that Scripture distribution should ever remain an expression of the missionary dedication of God's people in each generation. If one may be permitted to quote methods still found satisfactory in Britain (though, of course, still capable of further development), there are some 1,500 Auxiliaries or self-governing local committees at work in towns and villages and these are linked up with an army of perhaps, 10,000 voluntary collectors at work in the churches. Anything up to 10,000 voluntary meetings—most of them small gatherings of convinced people—are organised each year on behalf of the B.F.B.S., while some 6,000 sermons are preached in the churches about our work each year. Again, in the Netherlands efforts have been remarkably successful in recruiting church people as actual members of the Netherlands Bible Society. But whatever ways and means are adopted to raise our funds, none amongst us will believe that business dividends or built-up reserves (whatever economic security they

may offer for the circulation of God's Word) are a worthy substitute for the spiritual backing which comes from the day to day prayers and sacrifices of the members of the churches. A rather important principle is here involved for if, due to any cause, the voice of our Bible Society advocacy within the churches is diminished by some system of ratio-grant from centralised church revenue or by the wide extension of " business investment," something of fundamental value will have been lost for the whole Bible Society idea. In the story of the Bible Societies, therefore, lies something more than an aim or target in Scripture circulation, there must always be a consciousness of our day to day dependence on God and His people. A Bible society involves not only an end but the means and methods whereby the end is to be attained.

The Bible Societies already an Arm of the Church

What then in *essence* is a Bible Society? It is a company of men and women *within the living Church* whose conviction concerning the centrality of the Bible to the full Christian life prompts them to organise themselves into a fellowship committed to the wider circulation of the printed Word. If this is so, then perhaps we may see a little more clearly our relationship to the Church Universal, namely that the Bible Societies are in actual fact already one arm of the work of the Christian Church. It is therefore true to say that Bible circulation is already the work of the churches and that discussion concerning " handing over " our work to the churches is based on a faulty realisation of who we are and from whence we came. We are already members of the churches and our activity is part of the churches' witness in the world. Even though our organisation is specialised, highly technical and subject to no ecclesiastical control, it is nevertheless the expression of the conviction of countless numbers of Church members. Such a statement may not indeed be true in some places, for there are churches with little passion for freely circulating God's Word. There are others which are too small or too poor to help greatly in our work. Nevertheless, we draw our support from the churches and we serve them all. To feel that because of the separateness of organisation between the Bible Societies and the churches we are something apart from them is surely a fallacy.

Historically, Bible Society work came to birth by a rediscovery of the vital necessity for a full Christian life of Scriptural holiness, even though this re-discovery was made by a minority group of Christians. Our forefathers were prophets and prophets have always been in a minority, but it has been their function, under God, to remind the whole Church of its full duty. In the Church there have always been religious *Orders* which have been inspired to undertake specialised tasks. Generally, such groups have come into being through the inspiration of a few individuals, later—sometimes years later—to be granted the official recognition and blessing of the Church or churches. By and large, it can be said that the Bible Societies are such an Order. Their future destiny is to follow the vision concerning the Bible which God has given them ; and so to continue to serve the Church and co-operate with those within it who will help. Nevertheless we must not permit even the new consciousness of " the Church " in our theological thinking to lead us into any premature consideration concerning our own specific responsibility. It is surely a mistaken idea that the " churches " as we know them can do the work better than we ourselves. Let us be thankful for an increasing recognition of our work, remembering that it is the constant duty of the Bible Societies to call Church councils and congregations (as was recently attempted at Bad Boll) to the importance in her life and experience of the open Bible—its study, its translation and circulation.

Self-Support and Self-Government

In view of the foregoing, a further question poses itself—though perhaps an internal one for the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES. How, in future, shall we define what really constitutes a worthy Bible Society? In a land where the Christian community is microscopic when compared with its pagan environment or even an indifferent Christian environment—is it reasonable to suppose that there can be a Bible Society, functioning as such societies have functioned in the past? Ought we not rather to distinguish between a certain amount of local minority Bible Society *interest* and the actual ability to found, support and direct a healthy Bible Society? We ought always of course, to be alert to the Bible Society possibilities of new large Christian communities now growing up in the world, for often they are self-supporting and largely self-governing. These must be reminded of their responsibilities for " passing on the open Bible " beginning, it might be hoped, by organising Advisory Councils or Auxiliaries and later founding indigenous Bible Societies. The essential factor to recognise for future days is surely that for the existence of a real Bible Society there must be a strong indigenous Christian community—with conviction about Bible Society work and potential resources to support it. The acceptance of such a principle now might obviate some misconceptions. We ought never to superimpose the formation of a " Bible Society " upon a land where the Christian community cannot hope, for whatever reason, fully to support and direct it.

The above observations, as has been hinted, concern the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES and must be left for the Council of that organisation to consider, though false hopes may be raised if in every land even small groups of earnest Christian friends are encouraged to believe that full constituent membership of the U.B.S. can be obtained regardless of the strength of their indigenous Christian community. As we have said, Bible Society support lies within the Church and the personnel as well as the prayer of live local churches are indispensable to the vitality of any local Bible Society.

A United Christian Literature Front?

In our world to-day, unified by transport and lying in its entirety so open to propaganda by radio, cinema and the printed page, there remains (to quote the late William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury), only one solution for the problems of nations: that they accept one universal standard of values. " That," said Temple, " is precisely what the Christian Gospel offers." In face of the organised forces of pagan propaganda in our generation, will not the Bible Societies need to expand their own conceptions of co-operation with other arms of the Church's witness? On returning from India a missionary leader recently said: "A new and determined effort in Christain literature propaganda is urgent in India to-day. How I wish the Bible Societies could take the lead in it!" But can we? How far can the Bible Societies co-operate when their funds are given " solely " for the circulation of Holy Scripture? Is it true that if a colporteur sells both Christian literature and the Scriptures that it is the Christian literature which sells better than the Scriptures? On the other hand, have the Bible Societies no responsibility when sometimes the interpretation of their books " without note or comment," results in the furtherance of such organisations as the Watch Tower Movement and may (we are told) even lend support to racial prejudice? How far, too, in pagan areas are Bible Societies justified in retaining large depots, exclusively stocked with Scriptures, when bookshops in the same locality are stocked with anti-Christian literature and are not able to sell Scriptures because " along the

road " there is a Bible Society depot ? In a word, shall we not need for the future to co-operate more fully in distribution with the Christian literature agencies in order to get a united Christian presentation of the Gospel and to take advantage of the vastly growing army of new literates ? On the same question, we may ask : Is the present method of large Bible Society depots—with all their heavy overhead expense—justified, or ought we not much more fully to use the existing Christian bookshops and to assist them financially to become our Agents in the stocking and circulation of Holy Scriptures alongside the necessary Bible commentary and other literature essential for a full Christian life ? Is it not rather remarkable that we, who offer the " best seller " in the whole book-world have for so long continued in so many lands almost to ignore the book trade ?

As an example of what can be done along this line, in Equatorial Africa there are no " Bible Society depots " as such, and the development of Scripture circulation has gone hand in hand with the spread of the Christian bookshop—to the mutual benefit of both arms of Christian witness. The bookshops serve us on a commission basis and, of course, our trade strengthens them. The result has been an annual circulation of over 500,000 copies, half of which are full Bibles, published in nearly 300 languages. In areas where Christian bookshops are not so well organised, ought the Bible Societies by generous discounts to encourage the sale of Scriptures by the secular book trade ? Such details of our work though they may, on the surface, appear to be merely organisational are tremendously important if, as societies, we are to meet the needs of the vast reading public of to-day.

In Britain our method of using the ordinary bookshops is reinforced by a full-time Bible Society commercial traveller who systematically visits them with samples of our editions. This method has been tried in France in recent years and ought possibly to be employed in other areas.

The Personal Presentation of the Gospel.

Hitherto the Bible Societies have had a concern for the personal presentation of the Gospel by colportage, but following World War II, much of our colportage has ended. To-day, we need a re-examination of this whole method. It is, however, far more costly than it was formerly but is still essential in some fields. Where, in future, colporteurs are to be employed we ought, in view of past experience, to see that they are trained men. Moreover, here is a method whereby the Churches can (as they did in the earliest days of the Bible Societies) help in actual Scripture distribution. In a letter recently addressed by the U.B.S. Standing Committee to the missionary societies there occur the following words concerning voluntary colportage :

> ' In considering the recommendations of Willingen that Christian lay-men and women should share more fully in the active spreading of the Gospel, and in the light of experience in many lands, we have come to believe that voluntary lay workers, both members of the indigenous churches and Christian lay-folk from overseas engaged in business, industry or government service, are peculiarly fitted to share in this work of Scripture distribution. Conversely, we are convinced that voluntary colportage, in teams or by individuals, offers unique opportunities for lay-folk to give practical expression to their missionary concern. Seizing these opportunities would help to give to missionary activity the greater " initiative and mobility " to which the Willingen meeting called us.'

We might add that in future the " salesmanship " of the Gospel will be faced by more serious competition than in the past. Even in a land like Africa where the Church has hitherto been the chief educator of the people, multitudes are now escaping from the tuition of the Church due to the spread of

secular education. Much could be written of the desirability of visual aids and the use of illustration and large-type popular editions to assist circulation amongst the newly literate populations. These will undoubtedly concern all the Societies in the future.

Wider Co-operation

Ours has been called the Age of the Common Man, and though the future will undoubtedly continue to bring, as has the past, a crop of "new languages" into which the Gospel must be translated, the extent to which revisions of older translations into more colloquial speech are necessary is almost limitless. Such translational matters are not perhaps for every Bible Society to attempt, for language policy and techniques, developed for over a century, are the possession of only a few of them—not to speak of the costs of such work. Such specialised work need not, however, preclude the fullest co-operation of the smaller or younger Societies in both publication and circulation work, and ways for their fuller co-operation on the actual field must be found. Even amongst small communities, where it may not be wise or possible to found a Bible Society, advisory committees or auxiliaries, whose members shall be drawn from the local Christian communities, ought themselves to be encouraged to undertake responsibilities for the spread of the Gospel amongst a tribe or in an area where they have special interest. The Bible Societies are now world-wide and few are the lands where their voice is not heard. Our aim for future days must therefore be that every Christian become Bible Society minded, to have a part, however, small, in taking or sending the Word to the world. To this our Third Jubilee must be a clarion call.

Our Aim and End

Such then are a few of the considerations which may face the Bible Societies in future days. Yet through all, we must bear in mind that the translation, the production, the circulation of the Scriptures are merely means to the end—that God may be made more real to the people and that He may be glorified. To this end the Bible Societies (which to some extent are the conscience of the churches with regard to the Bible) may need to think deeply as to how far they can go beyond their present appointed tasks. How far can they stimulate the actual use of the Bible? Can we co-operate more closely with existing Bible reading associations? Ought we not to stimulate more expository preaching? Experience of experiments in Britain along these lines is as yet too recent to draw conclusions. But it can be said that the "Bible Weeks" organised in connection with our Third Jubilee between the British Council of Churches and the B.F.B.S. have been far more widespread and more eagerly sought after than could have been expected, and for this we thank God.

BIBLE SOCIETIES AND THE CHURCH

by A. H. Wilkinson

THE British and Foreign Bible Society was born on March 7th, 1804 and with it began the modern Bible Society movement. But whatever was born or begun that day it was certainly not Bible Society work, which in its origins predates the Christian Church. Like the Old Testament it was part of the rich legacy the Church inherited from the Jewish community.

Transcription must be almost as old as the earliest writings and circulation in a limited way came only a little later. Translation arrived some centuries later—in the fourth or third century B.C., when some Jews of Alexandria, to whom the mother tongue of their race was now an alien speech, began to

translate the Torah into Greek, possibly on the principle that no man can possess the Scriptures until they possess him and they cannot possess him until they do so in his own tongue.

Yet Bible Society work, that is transcription and publication, circulation and translation of the Scriptures, was extremely slow in developing. There are obvious historical and technical reasons which prevented any rapid progress in the middle ages and even in the two or three first centuries of our " modern " age. By the end of the 18th century there were only fourteen languages into which translations had been made and printed and by 1804 their number did not exceed 72.

The Reformation greatly increased the desire for personal possession of the Scripture and in England alone during the short reign of Edward VI no less than forty editions of the Great Bible and its New Testament were hurried from the presses. As the early fervour of the Reformation faded, so the production of the Scriptures slackened and, although it never ceased, yet by the end of the eighteenth century there was a general shortage everywhere. Had it not been so the Bible Society movement might not have been born until much later.

What happened in 1804.

If the Christian Church had for eighteen centuries carried on the essential work of a Bible Society, what new thing happened in 1804? Just this—that with a divine impertinence a few score of men undertook the whole Church's responsibility of providing Scriptures for all the world. They made no boasts; they said very little about it. The foundation document which they framed never mentioned the fact. The implication was in the title they gave to their new Society—British and Foreign—and the universal way in which they began their work.

So then there was a Society consecrated to this vast task and with consecration there was inevitably concentration, a term which in this case was to have far-reaching implications. Hitherto the manner of working had been somewhat haphazard and casual. No general council ever placed the matter on its agenda, or urged the faithful to support it. It was left to each church to provide for its own needs or to commercial firms to produce the Book at commercial prices. Where a church had a vigorous life the work flourished; it flagged when somnolence befell. Now all was to be changed. Careful planning became the order of the day. Local branches were started in the home lands to survey the needs and to raise funds wherewith to meet them. Agents were sent to the continent to do likewise. New Societies were created in Scandinavia, Holland, Germany and elsewhere. One agent reached Moscow three weeks ahead of Napoleon and had to flee to St. Petersburg where in 1812 he founded a new Society. Contacts were made with the U.S.A. and Canada and assistance in certain cases was given. The Gospel of St. John was published for the Mohawk Indians. A corresponding committee was set up in Calcutta and in 1812 an auxiliary was established there. Substantial grants were made to Carey at Serampore and even further afield. Morrison in his lonely post off the China coast was enabled to publish his Chinese translation. Within a decade of its birth the new Society had truly laid the foundations of a universal work. Its apostolic fervour has never failed. Each year has seen new work begun. The Society has never refused to publish a translation submitted to it unless it considered the work unworthy for its purpose.

A purposive economy.

The Holy Spirit, the primal Founder of the Society, determined the time of its creation. The Evangelical movement was breaking forth into new activities both at home and abroad. Three of the greatest missionary societies had been recently founded and as we have already seen the new Bible Society began to march side by side with them. As the missionaries prepared new translations the Society undertook all financial responsibility. By co-ordinating the work very considerable economies were effected. There might be, indeed the history of foreign missions shows there was, regrettable overlapping in the evangelical and educational spheres, but in translation there was practically none. If the missions had each been left to produce their own versions the waste of money would have been considerable. On the other hand, a Society specializing in one work creates specialists who must always be thinking of new avenues to efficiency. In its publications department the Bible Society has a professional staff specially trained in production work. Moreover, although the Society leaves it to the missionaries who are linguists to make the translations, it has a department which specializes in the science of translation. Over the years much useful experience has been garnered and codified. All translators are in constant contact with the translations secretary, who is able to give professional advice. Of recent years under the aegis of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES a quarterly journal has been specially published for translators, and conferences of translators are held in various fields so that experience may be shared. Such stewardship of resources both improves the work and saves valuable time. The inexperienced amateur now starts with much of the hardly won knowledge of those who have travelled the road before him.

Availability.

A universal sphere of activity, co-ordination, economy and efficiency all were marked features of the new movement, but in themselves these were not enough ; one thing was still lacking—general availability, by which is meant placing the books where they may be easily obtained at a price within the range of all. To achieve this most desirable objective two things were necessary over and above translation and production : a worldwide network of agencies, Bible houses, depots and sub-depots and a small army of colporteurs and a constituency of generous supporters whose gifts would enable the Society to subsidize the selling prices of its Scriptures. Both of these were largely accomplished during the first century of working. The first objective was important chiefly because in most countries means of distributions were rare or almost non-existent. By 1904 it was possible to claim that one Society or another had so extended its organisation that, apart from Arabia, Tibet and Afghanistan, there was no country into which the organization had not penetrated, and even into the three hermit lands the Scriptures found their way. The most effective and the most romantic work was done by the colporteurs, among whom George Borrow stands out as the most picturesque. These men, with a lowly task but a divine mission, penetrate into the remotest places and often at the peril of their lives. Each is an evangelist : every book he sells is ' the power of God unto salvation ' and carries on the great work when the colporteur has travelled to other fields. The abiding quality of its work is one of its most precious powers, for it is read and handed on and many a time leads to a conversion. It was in this way that Pastor Hsi of China fame was won to Christ. Colportage is the most expensive form of distribution but it does get the book to the people. Moreover by its agency the Bible Society becomes one of the great forces of evangelism, as the reports of the Tambaram Conference attest.

Colportage and benevolence are the two features which most clearly mark the differences between modern Bible Society work and the old. We have already noted the charitable work of the well-to-do Christians who in the early centuries supplied free copies of the Scriptures to their poorer neighbours. The extent of this work of benevolence was small; moreover, it was very casual. Of the books produced by the Bible Society probably 99% are sold below the full cost of production and distribution. Of the vast masses of the world population, especially in Asia and Africa, only a small proportion live with some degree of comfort. Many merely exist on the very margin of subsistence. They can purchase anything beyond food and clothing only with sacrifice. The Society has therefore established the principle that, so far as its funds allow, it will sell its Scriptures at a price the working man can afford to pay. It is then in this way and by colportage that the Scriptures have been made so generally available.

Translation work is, of course, very much related to the question of availability. In this department there has been a miraculous development. After almost eighteen centuries the Church by 1804 had produced only seventy-two translations. To-day, thanks to the wide extension of the missionary activity, the number has been raised to over 1,100. This has resulted in one of the most astounding facts in the long history of the Christian Church. For every man, woman or child who can read, some portion of the Scripture is available in his own tongue. We do not yet see the foreshadowing of Pentecost realized, but we have gone a very long way towards our goal.

But let no man think the great task is nearly done. It began before the Church and it will last till the pilgrimage of the Church is over. If we see a horizon to-day we know it will have receded by to-morrow, and with each new day the vision grows and becomes yet more glorious. And so the enthusiasm in which the Society was born is daily renewed. The word is the Word of God; the work is the work of God. He has never failed and He never will.

(*This article is a shortened version of one which appeared in the December* 1953 *issue of* **The Christian Graduate** *and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the Editor of that journal and of the writer.*)

ENGLAND IN 1804 — THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND

by Michael M. Hennell

I. The Social and Political Setting

Instability in the Political Scene

THE Bible Society was founded on March 7th, 1804, at the height of the Napoleonic wars. England had been at war with France since 1793; the Peace of Amiens had brought a year's truce, but in May, 1803 the struggle had been resumed. England was completely without allies for two years and in 1804 the country was more exposed to the dangers of invasion and conquest than in any other year before 1940. At Boulogne Napoleon was building up a flotilla of 1,300 flat-bottomed boats to carry 100,000 troops across the Channel; the total number of men encamped along the North Sea and Channel coast was 210,000. Napoleon boasted that "Eight hours of darkness which favour us would decide the fate of the universe." In May, Napoleon was

declared to be the Emperor of the French; he was making every endeavour to include England in that Empire. In England there was considerable alarm, public places were placarded with warlike speeches, including one made by Queen Elizabeth I at Tilbury at the time of the Armada, the regular army and the militia were re-inforced by a "Home Guard" considerably larger than that raised during the invasion scare of 1797, and naughty children were told by their parents and nannies that they has better be good or else Boney would catch them. Britain's real security lay in her fleets which under the command of Nelson, Cornwallis and Collingwood successfully bottled up the French ships in their ports and thus prevented them from giving convoy to the flotilla. Nevertheless some men in England took courage from the 340,000 volunteers who formed the "Home Guard," for instance the Reverend John Venn, Chaplain of the Clapham Armed Association, wrote to a friend in January, 1804 : "I have no fears of this wicked and cruel man being able to do any hurt to us united and armed as we are." Only two-thirds of these, however, were issued with muskets, and there were not enough pikes to go round for the rest.

The moving spirit in home defence was the younger William Pitt, who had been Prime Minister from 1783 to 1801. He had resigned because of differences with George III over the Act of Union with Ireland. Now as Warden of the Cinque Ports he turned Walmer Castle into a headquarters for the defence of the south-east coast. His successor as Prime Minister was Henry Addington, whose government of placemen was totally inadequate to handle the military situation. By 1804 Fox, Pitt's political rival, supported him in ousting Addington from office, and George Canning, his young friend, satirised the Prime Minister in verse, the most famous lines being :

Pitt is to Addington
as London is to Paddington.

By May Addington was out and Pitt was in.

Canning used to describe Addington as "The Doctor" who made pious provision for "The Family" in his government. This providing for friends was usual in the eighteenth century political life. Pitt was the first Prime Minister to set his face against it. But for the French wars he would have become the champion of Parliamentary Reform. Such Reform was badly needed.

The electorate did not represent the nation, and Parliament did not represent the electorate. There had been no significant change in parliamentary representation in England and Wales since Charles II's reign. Though Scotland and Ireland were now both represented following on the Acts of Union of 1707 and 1801, changes in wealth and movements of population were completely ignored. More than half of the 203 English parliamentary boroughs were located in Wiltshire and the sea-board counties stretching from Norfolk to Gloucester. Wiltshire and Cornwall had as many boroughs as the eight northern counties put together and the rapidly growing industrial cities of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield were unrepresented; on the other hand there were "rotten boroughs" like old

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The meeting which was held in the London Tavern, Bishopsgate, London, on March 7th, 1804, at which the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded, marked the beginning of a world-wide movement in the service of the churches which has made a deep impression on the life of the world. We need, however, not only to record this fact but to grasp it imaginatively. To feel the wonder of the birth of this movement we need to see it in the historical and religious setting of the times. We are grateful to the Rev. Michael M. Hennell for the following article which helps us to do so. Ed.

Sarum where there was no longer any population at all, which returned two members. The country was ruled by the landed aristocracy and the Lords controlled the Commons. It has been calculated that 276 seats out of 658 in the House of Commons lay at the disposal of landed patrons, and eight peers between them controlled 51 seats. In the counties 40 shilling freeholders had the vote ; but elections were in public, votes being given on the hustings where the sheriff sat amongst the landowners. In the boroughs the franchise varied, but in most places electors were a mere handful and easily managed by those who had money and influence. Seats usually went to the highest bidder and some candidates arrived at Westminster ruined men.

Integrity, which was lacking in Parliament, was lacking in almost every other walk of life, and the professions were crowded with quacks of every description. Fortunes were lost and won at the gaming tables, quarrels were settled by duelling, immorality and drunkenness were rife among all classes. Prince George, who became Regent in 1811, when his father's temporary insanity became permanent, was a rake who was drunk at his wedding, maintained a succession of mistresses and led a giddy riot of fashion. Fashionable society was elegant, witty and intelligent, but corrupt, and the moral standards of all classes were debased. The people's amusements were coarse and cruel, consisting of bull and bear-baiting, cock-fighting and regular attendance at public executions. At the latter the air was thick with bawdy songs sung either by professional street singers or by children from the slums. There was no specific criminal class ; for many of the poor it was as customary to pick a pocket as to drink a glass of beer. Punishments in no way fitted the crime and by 1804 there were more than two hundred offences punishable be death, including stealing five shillings from a shop, or a sheep from a farm. This barbarous criminal code was a witness to the power of the landowners in Parliament. Prisons and lunatic asylums were nearly all in private hands and were run for profit under disgusting conditions ; there were no social services and no provision for education by the State.

The Social and Economic Situation

By 1804 this picture of England was beginning to change for the better, but it was still a land in which the power and the wealth were in the hands of the big landowners and competition from the rising captains of industry was not yet being taken seriously. Wealth had come from enclosing land formerly cultivated in strips, and from a scientific revolution in farming which included the use of root crops to clean and fertilise the soil and of planned in-breeding of stock to produce finer quality wool, meat and milk. To feed the rapidly growing population drastic changes were absolutely essential but they bore hard on the small-holder and the peasant, who lost their land and means of livelihood, and either became paupers living on the rates according to the Speenhamland system of relief, or they drifted to the nearest town in search of employment in some form of industry. Arthur Young, who was first Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, wrote : " By nineteen Enclosure Acts out of twenty, the poor are injured, in some cases grossly injured." The poor in these parishes may say : " Parliament may be tender of property, all I know is I had a cow, and an Act of Parliament has taken it from me."

Nevertheless the country as a whole was probably more beautiful than at any other period. Enclosures meant careful hedging and ditching and the sight of acres of rolling country-side only broken by hedges, woodlands, roads and canals, was novel and must have been pleasing to the eyes. Forests

were heavily drawn on during the wars for timber and fuel. Roads were greatly improved by Turnpike Trusts employing full-time surveyors and charging users of this section of road a toll. Travel was mostly by road, in a coach or by horseback, and every year was becoming faster, but transport of goods and raw materials was by canal. Before the railway age of the thirties and forties the canals were the arteries of industrial England. There were, as yet, few ugly towns begrimed by smoke and dirt. The woollen industry of Yorkshire was still mainly a family business carried on in the home, though the fast running water off the moors was being used to drive factory machinery in new mills in Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Leeds. On the other side of the Pennines the newer Lancashire cotton industry was well established ; there were 52 cotton mills in Manchester alone by 1804, 32 of them steam driven. In Bolton, Bury and Blackburn and many other Lancashire towns the same tale could be told ; in these places self-made industrialists taking Richard Arkwright as a model, were busily utilising the inventions of Kay, Paul, Crompton and Cartwright, to their own financial advantage. Here was a class of men soon to challenge the parliamentary power of the landowners and to demand a political programme which would make possible cheaper food and lower wages.

Labour was plentiful : not only did those in the nearby counties who had suffered through enclosures seek work in Lancashire mills, but parents from distant counties and from Ireland sold their children to the factory owners ; the workhouses in London and other large towns transferred their pauper children to Lancashire workhouses to form an additional labour pool. Manufacturers preferred women and children to men to work for them; they were more amenable to discipline, their fingers were more nimble, they were shorter and therefore could be put in places where a grown man could not, or would not work ; what is more they could be paid less. To prevent the cotton thread from breaking, the atmosphere of the workshops was kept moist. The workers left the mill dripping with damp. In cold weather their clothes froze on their backs. The overheated atmosphere stimulated sexual desire and led to much immorality within the factory itself. Further, many of the Manchester mill girls eked out their meagre wages by means of prostitution often with their husband's consent. As for the children, they might work as much as fifteen hours a day ; often they were so tired that they fell asleep near dangerous machines or in corners from which they had to be rounded up by the overseer of the workhouse where they were kept under lock and key at night.

The beginning of Social Legislation

It might be thought that such degrading social conditions might lead eventually to a diminishing of population, but the opposite was the case. In 1804 everywhere in the country, but mostly in the Midlands and the North, the population was rapidly rising. This general increase is accounted for by a dramatic fall in the death-rate owing to a spectacular advance in medical science. The special increase of the northern half of the country is explained by the migration of labour already noted.

In 1802, Sir Robert Peel (father of the statesman), a calico printer from Bury, persuaded Parliament to pass the first Factory Act which limited the hours of child apprentices in cotton mills to twelve hours a day, forbid night work, and provided for some elementary education for the children in their employer's time. Though the Act only really applied to workhouse children, and though it was not enthusiastically enforced by the magistrates, it formed

a good precedent for future legislation. By 1804 workhouse labour was gradually becoming less necessary, as with the increased introduction of steam-driven machinery, new mills were being located in the larger towns where child labour was plentiful.

Further inventions which were later in the century to quicken the whole tempo of industrial change came in 1801, when Trevethick took a load of passengers down an ordinary Cornish road in a steam carriage, and in 1803 when Fulton made experiments with a steam-boat on the Seine.

Fear of Revolution

By 1804 this picture of political and social conditions in England was beginning to change, and to change rapidly. The reasons for this were the sobering effect which the shock of the French Revolution had on the English upper and middle classes, and the influence of the Evangelical Revival on the country as a whole. From the early days of the Revolution there were many people who believed " it can happen here," among these was William Pitt. When war with France and the Terror confirmed this, Pitt turned from Reform to repression. Progressive political clubs were banned, Habeas Corpus was repealed, and association of employers and workers was prohibited. Thus Trade Unions were made illegal for twenty-five years. Much alarm was caused by the popularity of the writings of Tom Paine amongst the lower classes, where his " Rights of Man " was selling for sixpence a copy. There is ground for believing that the Volunteers raised to fight Napoleon were also intended to preserve social peace at home. Fear of revolution had a profound effect on nineteenth century England, but not so profound an effect as the Evangelical Revival.

II. The Place of the Evangelical Revival

The Growth of Evangelism in the Church

The Evangelical Revival may be regarded as a protest against the worldliness and spiritual deadness of the eighteenth century Church. Nevertheless it is fatally easy to exaggerate the situation ; the usual picture of clerical profligacy, pluralism, absenteeism, nepotism, ignorance and heresy has been much overdrawn. Administrative abuses existed, it is true ; they had existed from the Middle Ages, and the Evangelical Revival did little directly to remove them. On the other hand there was much genuine piety among clergy and laity alike and the bishops on the whole were conscientious men. It is true, however, that most of the higher clergy, often drawing their incomes from benefices they seldom visited and posts that were sinecures, were excessively rich, whilst most of the lower clergy were exceedingly poor and ignorant. Prelates as well as peers made provision for their families and it was said when Dr. Sparke was Bishop of Ely, " one could find one's way across the Fens at night by all the little Sparkes in the country livings."

What really stirred the Evangelicals was that all zeal for evangelism had vanished in the reaction which followed the violence of the religious quarrels of the century and a half before the Restoration. " Let sleeping dogs lie " was a maxim which could be applied to religion as well as to politics. During the latter part of the seventeenth century theological interest had shifted away from the doctrine of the Atonement to that of the wisdom and benevolence of God the Creator and giver of all good things. Among the good things were the gifts of science and it must be remembered that the age of Charles II saw the formation of the Royal Society and was the age of Newton and Boyle.

Interest was no longer, as in the days of the Puritans, in the Bible but in God's other book, the Book of Nature, and emphasis was no longer on sin but on human reasonableness and the duty of moral effort. Gladstone saw the aim of the Revival very clearly when he wrote : " It aimed at bringing back on a large scale, and by an aggressive movement, the Cross, and all the Cross essentially implies, both into the teaching of the clergy, and into the lives as well of the clergy as of the laity." This involved a return to the Bible.

What the Evangelical Revival brought back into English religious life was, as we have said, a zeal for evangelism, a concern for the souls for whom Christ had died. But when evangelism came it was condemned as " enthusiasm," and " enthusiasm " to the eighteenth century upper and middle classes was what Communism is to them to-day, a bogey to be feared and a demon to be exorcised. During the years of the French Revolution, Jacobins and " enthusiasts " were considered the twin enemies of respectable people. When Hannah More* had been staying with her friend Dr. Porteous of London and was to stay next with John Venn at Clapham Rectory, the Bishop's coachman had strict instructions to set her down at the Plough Inn as his lordship's carriage must not be seen outside the house of a notorious Evangelical. If men had only realised it, it was the stability which the influence of these " enthusiasts " gave to English life which prevented a French Revolution from happening here ; the French historian, Elie Halévy finds in Evangelical religion the moral cement of English society. " It was the influence of the Evangelicals which invested the British aristocracy with an almost stoic dignity, restrained the plutocrats who had newly arisen from the masses from vulgar ostentation and debauchery, and placed over the proletariat a select body of workmen enamoured of virtue and capable of self-restraint."

Much of the credit for this belongs to John Wesley. He went on horseback to the newly populated areas in the north and in the midlands, which the established Church neglected, and also to the mining areas of Cornwall and the west-country, reaching home to the hearts of working men by his preaching and by the stirring words and tunes of his brother's hymns. Richardson, the novelist, wrote in *Sir Charles Grandison* : " Those people have great merit with me . . . . . I am sorry our own clergy are not as zealously in earnest as they. They have really given a face of religion to subterranean colliers, tinners and the most profligate of men, who hardly ever before heard the word or thing." Not only were these men converted but they were organized into societies and classes and taught to stand on their own feet, by being given responsibility as lay preachers, circuit stewards and treasurers. Through Methodism working men learnt to read and write and the art of organisation. Methodist class meetings were the seed-bed of nineteenth century trade-unionism and Mr. Morgan Phillips, the present Secretary of the Labour Party was not far wrong when he said that the English Labour Party owes more to John Wesley than to Karl Marx.

A New Life in the Churches

But this was not all that Wesley did. It was chiefly owing to him that emotion and the ministry of conversion was restored to the Church, and this new emphasis brought back the Holy Communion to its central place in worship. Though his followers left the Church of England and became Nonconformists, he saved Nonconformity, particularly Presbyterianism and

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*A writer of moral and religious treatises at end of 18th and beginning of 19th centuries, whose tracts led to formation of Religious Tract Society.

Independency, from becoming Unitarian in belief. Moreover his insistence that Christ died for all mankind and not only for the elect nor only for the white people, led to the modern missionary movement.

Nevertheless it is misleading to think of Wesley as the father of the Evangelical revival or to think of the Evangelical movement inside and outside the Church of England as an off-shoot of Methodism. Revival in England was preceded by revival in Wales. It was the preaching of Griffith Jones, Howell Harris and Daniel Rowlands that made Wales a country with a vigorous religious life. In 1730 a literacy campaign was started by Griffith Jones with his scheme of Circulating Charity Schools. The " Holy Club " was not started till 1729, the year before the campaign began, and Wesley's conversion did not take place till 1738.

Meanwhile many other clergy were undergoing a similar experience ; Grimshaw of Haworth, Walker of Truro, Venn of Huddersfield, Adam of Wintringham, are some of the clergy who became " enthusiasts " through their own study of the Bible. It was later that they met and associated with Wesley. Although most of them had closer affinities with George Whitefield, they belonged to the party of neither and by 1804 there was a distinct group of second generation Anglican Evangelicals of whom the leaders were Charles Simeon of Cambridge, John Venn of Clapham and Richard Cecil of St. John's, Bedford Row. Their numbers were increasing but most of them were in small country livings ; the only Evangelical to hold high ecclesiastical office was Isaac Milner who was Dean of Carlisle : there was no Evangelical bishop on the bench till 1815. Of Wesley's contemporaries only the ex-slave captain John Newton survived; he had been for many years the centre of the London group and a dominant influence over clergy and laity alike.

New Elements in Political and Social Life

It was Newton who had persuaded William Wilberforce, now the rich Member of Parliament for Yorkshire, to stay in Parliament. " You are not only a representative for Yorkshire," he wrote, " you have the far greater honour of being a representative for the Lord." Wilberforce, with the encouragement of Newton and Pitt, undertook the political leadership of the crusade against the Slave Trade. In May, 1804, his Bill passed the Commons, but the Lords threw it out : final victory came three years later. In this campaign he had the full support of a powerful body of Free Churchmen, of whom the Quakers were the most prominent, and also of freethinkers including Jeremy Bentham. His " cabinet," however, consisted of a group of personal friends, all but one of them Anglican, most of whom lived together on Clapham Common and worshipped at John Venn's church. These included Granville Sharp ; Henry Thornton, the financier ; Charles Grant, a director of the East India Company ; Lord Teignmouth, a former Governor General ; Zachary Macaulay, Governor of Sierra Leone and father of the historian ; and James Stephen, a lawyer from the West Indies.

The Slave Trade Campaign was only one of many enterprises the " Clapham Sect " undertook ; their influence was felt in nearly every corner of political, religious and social life. One has only to contrast the picture of eighteenth century society presented in this article with the sobriety and high moral standards of early Victorian England to realise that a great transformation had taken place.

By 1804 changes were already visible. Wilberforce and his friends were doing for the upper and middle classes, what Wesley had already done for the working classes. Wilberforce's book, "A Practical View," was published in 1797 and was addressed to " the Higher and Middle Classes," and soon became a best-seller. Burke, Arthur Young, Thomas Chalmers and Legh Richmond all claimed to have been influenced by it. Among those Wilberforce had in mind were those who were making their fortunes in the new factories.

About the same time Wilberforce and Shutu Barrington, then Bishop of Durham, had joined Sir Thomas Bernard in founding " The Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor." This society attempted to check the worst evils of the Industrial Revolution and to care for some of its casualties. Its reports include an account made in 1800 of the treatment and schooling of Dale's factories at New Lanark, suggesting that other employers might follow his example. There are also descriptions of the Duke of Bridgewater's coal mines, schemes for providing the unemployed with small-holdings, and accounts of numerous soup kitchens and poor societies founded to relieve want, and hospitals to cure disease. When Sir Robert Peel was collecting evidence for his Factory Bill he called at the Society's offices and gave £1,000 to its work. When he introduced his motion Wilberforce pleaded that the benefits of the Bill might be extended to other industries. Contrary to popular legend Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect did all that was in their power for the women and children in the factories. Further they befriended chimney-sweeps, attacked the barbarous criminal code and called for an enquiry into the state of the prisons. They made duelling illegal in the services, and though the House would not pass Bills against cock-fighting and bull-baiting, they forced these evils out of our public life by vigorous propaganda. The tracts that Hannah More and Legh Richmond wrote were so effective that they drove pornographic literature from the market.

To further this work the Religious Tract Society had been formed in 1799.

III. The Growth of Missionary Concern and Formation of the Bible Society

The turn of the century was the age of societies, and Evangelicals formed societies for any and every purpose, but there were two main groups—the missionary and the literature societies.

The publication of the " Voyages " of Captain Cook and a zeal for God led the Kettering shoe-maker, William Carey, to urge his friends to form the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 ; he sailed for India in the following year. " He marks the beginning," writes Latourette, " in British and American Protestantism of an enterprise which planned in terms of the globe." Where he led others followed. In 1795 the interdenominational London Missionary Society was formed and in 1799 the Church Missionary Society at the instigation of John Venn, Charles Simeon, Richard Cecil and John Newton. While friendly interest and support of the other societies had been maintained from their inception by these members of the Eclectic Society, they felt that a new and distinctively Anglican missionary society was required. Co-operation at a much deeper level became possible with the foundation of the Bible Society, for circulation of the Scriptures was a common concern beyond denominational differences. The enthusiasm these men felt for the Bible Society may be gauged by the instance of John Venn telling John Owen that he was secretary of " the finest institution in the world."

The Literature societies had an even more direct effect on the formation of the Bible Society. At the time of the Evangelical Revival there was no State education. The Charity Schools and dames' schools provided some facilities for some of the poor ; but the majority of Englishmen could not read at all. Griffith Jones in Wales and Wesley in England engaged in vast literacy campaigns : the Welsh circulating schools taught 158,237 people to read in twenty-four years, and two editions of 150,000 copies of the Welsh Bible were circulated at reduced prices. Wesley taught that it was the duty of Christian parents to teach children to read the Bible and to this end he produced a series of books in his own " basic " English for the scarcely literate. He also founded societies for the distribution of Bibles among the Services, and of tracts among the poor. In the 1790's there was a renewal of the Welsh Revival and a further demand for Bibles. The S.P.C.K. could only meet a quarter of the demand and were not prepared to undertake a big reprinting with invasion threatening and the Welsh unable to pay for their orders. Thomas Charles of Bala visited the Committee of the Religious Tract Society and appealed to them. Joseph Hughes, the Secretary and a Baptist Minister in Battersea, suggested : " Surely a society might be formed for this purpose, and if for Wales, why not for the Kingdom, why not for the world ? " April, 1803, Hughes and Joseph Reyner, who was Treasurer of the R.T.S., were breakfasting with Wilberforce and Grant to discuss the formation of a Bible Society. Afterwards other members of the Clapham group were canvassed. On March 7th, 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was born with Lord Teignmouth as President, Granville Sharp as Chairman, Henry Thornton as Treasurer and Wilberforce, Stephen and Macaulay as members of its first Committee.

HARSH WORDS—BLESSING IN DISGUISE ?

The Challenge to Bible-Mission

by Eivind Berggrav

BIBLE Society work in Norway was built on solid foundations, carrying out all the responsibilities of a Bible Society as we envisaged them and as they were stated in our constitution. Our task was to provide Bibles for all the Norwegian people, including the Laps in the North with their peculiar language. This duty we fulfilled. Every congregation gave an annual offering for the provision of Bibles, and a sufficient sum of money was collected to present the Holy Book to candidates for confirmation during the year, and to some others as well. All this work continued as if by itself, it had become routine, it was taken for granted.

At Haywards Heath (Elfinsward) in 1946, when the " United Bible Societies " came into being, I listened to some harsh words from one of the representatives of the " big " Societies. He said that the kind of Bible Society that was engaged only in providing books for its own national areas was a " selfish " Bible Society. It was merely trading in the Word of God : it printed and sold Bibles and used the profit to provide its own people with more books. It had no heart for all the millions in the colonial world and elsewhere who had *no* Bibles at all.

My first impression on listening to these words was that the man had spoken neither law or justice. We had done our duty, and that was a fact !

But his harsh words proved to be a call from God.

I went home and told my board that we were egoistic and full of business motives and that we lacked vision of the real purpose of the Bible. They were startled, but not offended.

The idea we got was something like this :

Till now " the Londoners " had provided " our " island, our special field of missionary work, Madagascar, with all the Scriptures needed. It might be a call to us now to unburden " the Londoners " of this duty, thus making it possible for them to take up work in other " black " spots. To all Norwegians the very name of Madagascar has a certain magical note—it is known by any little child. An appeal in that name might work wonders—even in our Christian flock, on which so many and such heavy demands from various sorts of " missions " are constantly being showered.

It was, however, at once pointed out that such a course of action would be contrary to the constitution of the Society. We all agreed that the rules must therefore be altered.

This was done and the result published. The response from the flock of God was unanimous : We are prepared—indeed we are glad—to take on this new task !

A first collection was made which provided sufficient means for one year, and an agreement was made with the B.F.B.S. that we should take over for one year their expenses for Madagascar.

This ready enthusiasm at the outset would not be sufficient to carry on a long-term work ; we knew we should have to reorganise the whole work of our Society. Until that time everything had run smoothly, with the assistance only of the clergy and the congregational councils. Now we needed the co-operation of the laity, preferably of one " team " in every parish. So an additional paragraph on Bible-Circles was added to our rules. These Bible-Circles were to pay a minimum annual subscription of 50 crowns and at the same time were to be considered as *commissioners* of the " Bible-trade," i.e. of distributing Bibles in their communities. A " Bible-secretary " was appointed in each diocese and duly instructed, and we ourselves were encouraged to see how they inspired and encouraged one another during the course that was held for them.

We then contacted the B.F.B.S. and undertook responsibility for the costs hitherto paid by them for Bible work in Madagascar. We did not at once dare to take over the printing of editions, and in any case London had some in stock which would meet the needs for the present.

I must confess I find Christians slow in changing their habits. They were immediately willing to contribute gifts for Malagasy Bibles, but they did not so readily accept the new organisation of the Bible work. But my experience in such matters has always taught me to go on ! For they will follow as soon as they hear the voice of God in the call.

This is proving true also in this instance. During the last five years the whole idea of Bible responsibility has changed—the call for " Bible mission to foreign fields " has gone to people's hearts, and we have felt the urge to make even greater use of their Christian inspiration : we have started *printing* in Malagasy. When it became known that a Norwegian printing firm was setting up the Malagasy New Testament, enthusiasm spread like wild fire. We were overwhelmed with offers of help, and an idea was put forward : that individual Christians should be allowed to buy Malagasy Bibles, at a price ten times the cost, and to present them with a dedication to some individuals in Madagascar, whose names would be supplied by a missionary or a Malagasy clergyman. We were told that in this way enough money could be raised for an extra edition. One man has signed for 500 copies !

Of course it sounds a little crazy—yet not so crazy as to be outside of God's field of action. We are going to consider the project. I mention it only to illustrate how the fire of " Bible Mission " is rapidly spreading among our Christians.

But calculations have to be made, as in any business firm, even in this sphere of Christian enterprise. And we felt the responsibility heavily on our shoulders. Imagine what it meant, when in our next session we received a letter from a former Danish missionary in Santalistan (a joint field for Denmark, Norway and the U.S.A.) telling us that the *Boros* were in need of the complete Bible as they had only the second part of it (which was, of course, provided for them by the B.F.B.S.) ! There was at hand a man fully qualified to undertake the translation, if we were prepared to pay our share of the cost. The project was calculated to cost 115,000 crowns. We considered it seriously, and the answer was : yes ! Had we gone too far ? There seemed to be some sort of answer to that, when shortly afterwards a letter came from our Norwegian Missionary Society (Stavanger). I hardly knew whether to laugh or to weep when reading it. I decided instead to pray. The letter, from one of the missionaries in the North Cameroons, read as follows :

" It has been on my mind for some time that we ought to get the Bible translated into the Mbum language. Two of our missionaries, F. and O., have spent all their spare time in an attempt to do it, but there is no possibility of getting it done if they cannot be set free to work exclusively on the translation. Mbum is spoken by about 100,000 people, but it is understood by many more. The number is not big, but we are in despair at not being able to offer them the Holy Bible. The Gospel of St. Luke was translated some twenty years ago and printed by the B.F.B.S., but the stock is out. If it were possible for the Norwegian Bible Society to support our man for this work, it would mean more to these people than words can say."

This was the content of the letter from the Cameroons. The board of the Missionary Society confirms the facts stated, and adds that other societies working in the field share the same wish. " Could you help ?" they ask. No, we *could* not, but we felt we *must*. We were overwhelmed by this new task of the Bible Mission. We had intended to go slowly and not hurry on like this. Knowing that God's errand is more urgent in our day than ever before in history, we must remember Carey's appeal : " Try great things for God !" and his later saying when he had had the Bible translated into thirty-four languages : " It was not possible, but if you go on, it will go."

We have distributed more Bibles within Norway since we started the Bible Mission than ever before, so it looks as if mission fields lend inspiration to one another. We feel as if God has opened this new door to us just in order to create new life in our old home.

Thus the harsh words spoken at Elfinsward in 1946 seem to have proved blessed words.

What I have told you now is only a narrative from one small country. I leave it to you to draw the conclusions !

(*This article is the substance of an address given by Bishop Berggrav at the Regional Conference of the U.B.S. held at Bad Boll, Germany, in June* 1953.)

BIBLE SOCIETIES ON THE MARCH

by Olivier Beguin

"A NEW DAY has dawned for the Bible Societies in Germany." This was the concluding statement made by old Prof. Dr. Hijkmann towards the close of the last meeting of the German Bible Societies in the D.D.R. (German Democratic Republic). Dr. Hijkmann is chairman of the Bible Society of Saxony (Eastern Germany) and was for many years chairman of the Federation of German Bible Societies. This was not an emotional utterance made by an impulsive character on the spur of the moment. It was the hopeful but sober judgment of a man of experience who has learned to read the signs of the times and has been waiting long and working assiduously for a renewal in the outlook and activity of the Bible Societies in Germany.

For some years now, various German Bible Societies have felt increasing uneasiness as regards the scope of their activity and the lack of real vision in their work, both at home and abroad. The closer contacts which they developed after the second world war with Bible Societies in other countries, particularly those of America, Great Britain and the Netherlands through the fellowship of the U.B.S., have led them, step by step to question some of the features of the situation in which they find themselves to-day. There can be no doubt also that the very penetrating studies presented at the U.B.S. regional Conference in Bad Boll last June, in which the various speakers there threw light on the real situation of Bible work in Germany and in most of the countries of Continental Europe, helped a great deal towards that same end and have obliged many a Bible Society leader to take stock and to study afresh the task of a Bible Society in the world as it is to-day. Thus the conviction ripened with some that the time had come to move forward : thoughts began to crystallise and concrete proposals were put into shape.

At their meeting last October, the Eastern German Bible Societies considered and adopted a series of guiding principles which should help to regulate the activity of the Bible Societies in Germany in the future. Although principles were adopted there in respect of the work in the D.D.R., the Bible Societies hope they will also prove acceptable and eventually be endorsed by the whole Federation of German Bible Societies. In themselves these guiding principles contain nothing revolutionary. Their main value indeed resides in the fact that through them is expressed the willingness, and a genuine urge, to instil new life into the activity of the Bible Societies.

"The task of the Bible Societies has always been the same, namely the circulation of the Bible in the world in acceptable editions. To that end they collect the necessary funds, try to eliminate hindrances to Scripture circulation in the widest sense, that is to say both the physical distribution of the Book and its spiritual acceptance by those who receive it. As these obstacles vary at different periods, so do the ways and methods applied by the Bible Societies have to vary.

"At the time when the Bible Societies were formed, the high price of the Book was the main obstacle to its wide circulation. To-day the widespread ignorance of the Bible in our nations is due to spiritual causes.

"The Bible is considered among large sections of the population as out of date and uninteresting . . ." In this situation one way open to the Bible Societies of overcoming this difficulty is to modernise the external presentation of the Bible with modern types and binding, a new arrangement of the text according to its meaning, etc. Another way is to promote the revision of out-dated translations and the publication of modern versions. A third measure might be the production of annotated Scriptures or Bibles provided with introductions for each book, as was customary in Luther's time, e.g. short guides advising the new reader on how to proceed in his journey of exploration through the Bible, etc. A Bible Society, it is considered, is not only a Christian publishing house which produces various editions of cheap Bibles. It has also an evangelistic responsibility. It must continually remind Christians that the Bible, however nicely produced, is a book to be read and studied. It must continually hold up before both clergy and lay readers the importance of the Bible for the life of their congregations, make them Bible-minded and Bible Society minded. The following suggestions are therefore made : the appointment of officers for liaison between the Bible Societies and churches in a region ; the organisation of voluntary colportage, of Bible courses, Bible camps, annual Bible weeks ; the creation of groups of friends of the Bible and of the Bible Society, the launching of Bible campaigns and Bible exhibitions. Thus great emphasis is also laid on the various methods and ways (almost completely neglected to-day) by which the Bible Societies could, in collaboration with the churches and their various organs, discharge this responsibility of theirs to see that copies of the Scripture are adequately circulated and used ; and how, in addition, greater support could be enlisted for the development of the work at home and abroad.

"But the Bible Societies have not only an evangelistic responsibility for the people of their own country, they also have a missionary task. The Gospel must be circulated to all nations and the Bible Societies therefore have to answer the call again to-day to take a share in the production of Bibles and New Testaments for the mission field . . . Church collections should be used not in order to make possible a general reduction in the cost of Scriptures but rather (*a*) for occasional free distributions of Scriptures in particular circumstances (*b*) for the production of editions for the mission field."

Thus there is a new awareness of the world-wide responsibility of the Bible Societies. Indeed those of Eastern Germany seem to have become conscious that the revisalisation of their work at home cannot be achieved unless the Societies come to grips with the whole task ; that no Bible Society can be both living and selfish.

But all this might be just pious phraseology and would not justify the enthusiasm of Prof. Hijkmann, had it not been followed by concrete decisions such as the appointment of a General Secretary of the Societies in the D.D.R. whose function will be precisely that of helping the various Bible Societies to implement the guiding principles adopted. These principles are founded on the spirit of close co-operation which has developed between the two main Bible Societies, the Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin, and the Altenburg Bibelanstalt, which, with some help from abroad, have supplied almost all the Scriptures circulated since the end of the war in Eastern Germany. These Societies have also caught a vision which, after the many experiences made by the Christians in Germany of the relevance of the Gospel for to-day and of the blessings of a world-wide spirit of Christian fellowship, has bound them together in the firm resolve to bring new life to Bible Society work in Germany.

That a new spirit is beginning to pervade the Bible Societies in Germany is no insignificant development. For it must be borne in mind that there are millions in Germany to-day who were brought up with the Bible as the basis of their spiritual life, and these are among those who might also catch the vision of the great things that wait to be accomplished.

These notes would not be complete without some reference to another development which took place among the Bible Societies of the Continent last autumn.

" Collaboration " and " co-operation " are words frequently used in the literature of the United Bible Societies. But one often has a feeling that they do not contain much substance. It is therefore all the more noteworthy that some Societies in Europe are trying to give some real content to these well-worn words. Recently two small working groups of Bible Societies met in order to see what steps were needed to achieve effective co-operation. In the middle of October last, delegates from the Bible Societies of France, Belgium and the Netherlands came together at the invitation of the latter. Early in November a similar meeting was organized by the Scandinavian Societies. In each case very concrete problems were studied : the use of common publicity materials, particularly visual aids ; the exchange of services in the field of colportage, such as the use of Bible vans ; the joint purchase of paper ; sharing in joint publication projects for the mission field ; agreeing to standard systems of classification and cataloging for Bible productions ; sharing storage facilities, office machinery such as addressographs, phototype machines, etc.

Co-operation between Bible Societies cannot be limited to some isolated agreements regarding fields of operations, editorial responsibilities, financial support of various kinds. Co-operation is a real, conscious and intimate mutual give and take, an exchange of services and not unilateral support. There have been in the past other instances of close collaboration between two societies, such as that between the French and the Belgian Societies. But new ground was turned when, as happened last autumn in Amsterdam, a larger, more firmly established Society suggested not only helping others but availing itself in certain fields of the help of smaller Societies, and sharing with them in projects and action which it could certainly have undertaken alone had it not wished to help younger and weaker sisters to walk side by side with it along the road on which, we hope, all Bible Societies will one day find their common way.

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Africa

THE Rev. W. J. Platt, General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, has recently returned from a tour of Africa in the course of which he visited Uganda, the Rhodesias, the Union of South Africa and other regions, and had discussions with the leaders and representatives of churches of all denominations, heads of missions, Government officials, bookshop managers, members of the Society's permanent staff, and other people of knowledge and vision. He returned to London with profound conviction of the urgency of the work to be undertaken. "Rapid economic development has taken place," says Mr. Platt, "and remote villages of the Rain Forest or on the Veldt have been connected by road, rail or aeroplane services. Due to the amazing development of mineral resources the export of raw materials and the spread of literacy, the traditional ties of the African to his soil, his native chief, his religion and his family, have been disturbed . . . . . Because of these factors and the general world awakening of 'subject' peoples, politics have now become a major interest in the life of the educated African . . . . . At one time civilization seemed available to the African through the portals of the Christian Church alone ; to-day much of urban Native life runs along the lines of the trade union and political association." Nevertheless, he states, "Africa still remains one of the few areas in the world which offer to our work and to the Christian Mission an enormous and widespread opportunity."

Africa is already one of the largest fields of the Society's work. In East, West and Central Africa the annual circulation of Scriptures is over 400,000 volumes ; in the Rhodesias about 80,000 and in South Africa more than 300,000—a total of about 800,000 volumes (complete Bibles forming about half this number) in some 300 languages. Yet this mission must be intensified. The B.F.B.S. has already taken new steps in order to meet the situation. The creation of a new Agency of the Society has been decided upon. It will cover the entire Congo basin, taking in the Belgian Congo, the lower part of French Equatorial Africa and Portuguese Angola. The headquarters will be in Leopoldville in Belgian Congo. Mr. A. W. Marthinson, Swedish, who has served the Society in North China and in Hongkong will be in charge of this work.

Further, the West African Agency, extending from Nigeria to the Atlantic Coast—in abeyance for some years—is to be revived. Plans for this are being discussed.

But the extension of Bible work in Africa is also to be sought on other lines, which still need to be explored carefully. The Union of South Africa excepted, the circulation of Scriptures throughout these territories is carried on mainly through the Mission bookshops. It is, therefore, suggested that every form of help and encouragement, financial or otherwise, be given to bodies such as the United Society for Christian Literature and the United Missions in the Copper Belt, for instance, to enable them to expand and extend their work.

In addition, the B.F.B.S. alone or in union with these and other Christian organisations, intends to give serious consideration to the possibility of the greater use of colporteurs and of the Bible Vans, provided not only with books but with cinematograph and other visual aid devices. A van belonging to the Rhodesian Agency is being equipped without delay for service in the Native locations as a beginning.

Special conferences of representative Church leaders and missionaries who have special knowledge of given areas and their peoples are to be convened with the object of collecting for the Society's examination ideas and proposals for the best methods of furthering the translation, distribution and teaching of the Scriptures.

Argentina

The *Rio de la Plata Joint Agency* of the American and British Bible Societies is to have its own Bible House in Buenos Aires. A central site has been found and the building will be erected in the course of 1954.

The Agency has also launched a quarterly containing news about the work of the Bible Society and designed for the increasing number of supporters of Bible work in Argentina. At the same time a promotion folder, " The unique objective of the Bible Society," has been issued setting forth the purposes, needs, terms of membership and other information relative to the work of the Agency.

In spite of a shortage of complete Bibles, circulation in Argentina is again up this year—a total of 1,086,766 as against 1,015,837. This year's total is made up of 40,672 Bibles, 53,645 New Testaments, 992,449 Portions.

Austria

The *Austrian Bible Committee* held its annual meeting at the end of September. It was attended by representatives of most of the Evangelical denominations. The chairman of the Federation of Swiss Bible Societies, the Rev. R. Vollenweider, gave the main address. The meeting closed with a service of dedication for the third colporteur recently engaged by the Bible Committee, who will be based at Graz.

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The British and Foreign Bible Society has provided the Austrian Committee with a Bible van, furnished with visual aid equipment, for a trial period of six months. The use of film strips and movies has developed a great deal in recent times and has met with considerable success. For just over two years two films of the American Bible Society (" The Book for to-morrow " and " That they may have light ") have been shown at over 300 gatherings. The British and Foreign Bible Society in Canada has lent a copy of its film " Frontiersmen " to the Austrian Bible Committee and this will be shown during the winter months, along with the well-known B.F.B.S. film on Bible work in West Africa, entitled " That they may have life."

*

An international stamp exhibition, " The Gospel and Postage Stamps," took place in Vienna during November. It was organised on the occasion of the publication of a special series of stamps by the Austrian Government in connection with a collection for the reconstruction of the main Evangelical school in Vienna, which was destroyed during the war. Collections of stamps from seven nations were shown, and only those stamps were exhibited whose design relates to a Bible theme or to aspects of the life of Evangelical churches. A special issue of Austrian stamps—a series of five—were all connected with the history of protestantism in Austria ; one of them represents Luther's Bible open at the front page.

Cuba

"Bohemia," an illustrated weekly widely circulated in Cuba recently devoted three pages to the Bible. J. Gonzales Molina describes there the work of the Bible Societies in the field of translation and distribution of the Scripture and the influence of the Bible in the life of men and nations.

*

The agent of the Bible Society reports that Cubans buy Scriptures in ever-increasing quantities. For the whole of the West Indies agency the total increased from 470,732 copies in 1952 to 679,958 in 1953. Reference is made also to the work of the colporteur Romillo, a young man with a speech impediment. He sells his books through the use of a printed card indicating what he has to sell. In this way, colporteur Romillo sold 80,000 Gospels in 1952 and 70,000 during the first nine months of 1953.

Cyprus

Special help has been forwarded to the B.F.B.S. Agency in Cyprus to enable it to provide free copies of the Holy Scriptures to victims of the recent earthquakes in the island. In addition to the special grant made by headquarters, gifts were sent from Ethiopia and the Netherlands. It is believed that the amounts thus granted will cover the needs.

Czechoslovakia

The Lutheran Church of Slovakia is working on a new translation of the Bible into the Slovak language. The New Testament had already been published in 1942. A new edition was issued last year, which included the Psalms translated by Bishop Vladimir Cobrda, in co-operation with a small committee of scholars and writers. This Slovak translation is intended to be read in churches ; it is in modern language, but respects the traditional terms and forms of religious language.

A non-denominational and in fact non-religious translation (and not very reliable from the philological point of view) in Czech of the Old Testament has been published during recent years in several volumes, in a series containing mainly outstanding novels, poems, etc. The translator, Vladimir Srámek also translated Homer's Iliad and Odyssey for the same series. The aim of this translation is purely literary : it treats the biblical books as monuments of classical literature.

England

The *British and Foreign Bible Society* arranged another laymen's conference last November, in Bournemouth. Between forty and fifty leading laymen from various walks of life gathered for a week-end to hear addresses on the place of the Bible in Britain and in the world to-day and to become better acquainted with the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and with the problems which face it. It was recalled that it was a group of lay people who, 150 years ago, brought about the formation of the B.F.B.S. and that at a time when the importance of lay activity in the Church is again being rediscovered and fostered everywhere in the world, it was important that laymen should think together about the significance of the Bible and of the work of the Bible Society for the times in which we live.

Members of the conference agreed that it was right and proper for the Society to maintain and develop its contacts with the laity and asked that a similar conference be organised again next autumn.

*

Three more booklets in the Book Club series published in connection with the Third Jubilee have come off the press. *The Bible in Islam,* by J. W. Sweetman ; *The Bible in Japan,* by J. C. F. Robertson, and *The Bible in India, Pakistan and Ceylon,* by Mrs. Margaret Sinker. These booklets give in a summarized form an excellent picture of the historical development and present situation of Bible work in the areas concerned. Three further booklets of a similar kind are in preparation on the Bible in Korea, in East Africa and in Brazil.

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The Jubilee exhibitions of the B.F.B.S. " We want to live " and " They Triumph " (see BULLETIN No. 15, pp. 16-17), have started their tour of the cities of the United Kingdom. The bookings (for a week each) already cover more than a year. All the critics unite in praising the high quality of the presentation, which is modern in taste and techniques, simple and yet carefully prepared down to the last detail.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother paid a visit to " We want to live " when it was shown at the Royal Exchange, in the City of London, in November. The Minister for Education, Miss Florence Horsburgh, gave the inaugural address when the same exhibition was opened a week later at Greenwich.

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The campaign of Bible Weeks was opened on October 20th by a special service at St. Paul's cathedral in London. The service was attended by H.R.H. Princess Margaret and by a congregation of more than 2,500 people, including representatives from all parts of the British Isles where Bible Weeks are being held this winter. About 100 local Councils of Churches joined in the effort. In many places public meetings are being accompanied by some form of exhibition, whether one of the set-pieces of the B.F.B.S. or an exhibition of Bibles, as at Leeds, where an interesting collection of manuscripts and early printed Bibles in Greek, Latin and English are on show.

In several towns the Bible Weeks campaign will also be marked by series of public Bible readings by well-known local figures, and in many cases the co-operation of local shop-keepers has made possible concerted arrangements of window displays in the shopping centres.

*

The B.F.B.S. announces the following recent publications :

The first complete Old Testament in *Luo* (Dho-Luo). This language is spoken by some 750,000 people living around the Kavirondo Gulf of Victoria Nyanza. The New Testament is being revised and will later be re-set and bound with this Old Testament.

The Four Gospels, Acts, Philippians, Colossians, James and John 1, 2 and 3 have been printed in one volume for the *Mataco* Indians living in Northern Argentina. The Gospels and Acts are a revision of the earlier translation. These books were to reach Argentina before the end of last year.

The first New Testament in *Roviana,* spoken in New Georgia of the Solomon Island Group, has been printed in Australia. This publication fitly commemorates the Jubilee of the service of the translator, Rev. J. F. Goldie of the Methodist Mission.

The new edition of the *Latvian* New Testament in roman characters, with a completely revised translation of the Psalms, has been printed in London. The B.F.B.S. also contemplates having the old Testament transcribed into roman characters.

France

The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel reports that two of their workers recently made a four months' tour in France, with a short visit to Belgium and to French-speaking Switzerland. The object of the tour was to search out Jewish people and distribute to them Hebrew-French New Testaments. 2,300 copies were circulated in this way.

*

Last summer, for the first time, the Bible van of the Alliance biblique française accompanied one of the several " teams for evangelisation through drama " active in France to-day. This co-operation is reported to have been very satisfactory. Churches have also collaborated more closely with the colporteurs' team of the van and sales have increased accordingly.

Germany

Friedland Camp is the camp through which all Germans repatriated from Russia enter West Germany. Bibles and Testaments have been made available by the German Bible Societies to the pastors of the camp for distribution among newcomers wishing to have a copy of the Scripture. Recently one of these repatriated prisoners enquired whether he could buy a Bible, since he had rediscovered its value during his captivity and had made a vow to use the first money he received after repatriation to buy a Bible.

It is also reported that many of the people passing through Friedland camp who had in the past shut their ears to the Word of God, have now found their way back into the Christian community.

*

The Lutheran Publishing House in West Berlin published 100,000 magazine copies each of the Gospel of Luke and of the Acts of the Apostles. Thanks to the help of the American Bible Society almost the whole edition could be offered at a nominal price to Christian organisations working among refugees. The whole edition was out of print within a few weeks.

The Austrian Bible Committee also received 10,000 copies of each Portion.

Guatemala

On October 15th, Secretary Limkemann and Secretary Holmgren, of the American Bible Society, met with a committee of Christian leaders, both national and mission, from Guatemala, to review Bible Society work in that city. The committee met at the Central America Bible Institute in the capital city. Because of the unusual growth of the Evangelical community in Guatemala, it was proposed that a sub-Agency be established with a full-time worker in charge. The group strongly recommended increasing the colportage programme in Guatemala, special attention to be given to the northern areas of the country where the organised church has not yet gone in any significant numbers. The committee pledged itself to increasing support of the Bible cause and agreed to give additional attention to both the distribution and the use of the Scriptures in regions where the Church is not at work.

Haiti

The American Bible Society is sponsoring a new translation of the New Testament into Haitian Creole. " Creole is not just a debased form of French. Some experts suggest with plausibility that the syntax and grammar of Creole resemble certain African languages, while much of its vocabulary is drawn from old French, especially from the dialects of Normandy and Picardy of about the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the addition of some African, Spanish and English words." (H. O. McConnel in the *International Review of Missions*, October, 1953, p.440.) Creole is now recognised as an official language, along with French, the latter being spoken correctly by only one-tenth of the population. The American Bible Society has already published the Gospel according to St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles in Creole (the latter in a diglot edition with the French translation). The work of translation is now being continued by a native pastor, in co-operation with an interdenominational committee of five. A Creole New Testament was published several years ago by the Haitian Bible Society—an organisation which is not related to the United Bible Societies—but the translation has not been generally accepted.

The churches, Unesco and the local government have recently launched various literacy campaigns ; the estimated result is that 40,000 people learned to read Creole. Plans are under way for a new and more intensive literacy drive.

The American Bible Society has decided to open a sub-Agency in Haiti.

Hungary

An important Bible exhibition has been opened in the Reformed Church Library in Budapest. It focussed on the history of the Biblical text and relates to the work being done at present by scholars on the revision of the Hungarian translation of the Bible.

Photocopies of samples of various Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, and a facsimile copy of the Gutenberg Bible are shown along with manuscript Bibles, among which the most remarkable are a copy of the Venitian edition of the Hebrew Bible (15th century), the only existing copy of John Huss's

original Bible and a polyglot Testament of 1582 with Beza's Greek text, two latin translations in print and handwritten copies of a German and a Hungarian translation.

Bibles in the various European languages are also displayed alongside copies of all the various Hungarian translations published up to the present.

India

The appointment of a revision committee and of a chief reviser for the Hindi Bible has now been approved by the British and Foreign Bible Society in consultation with the *Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. The chief reviser, the Rev. Y. D. Tiwari, will spend a year in Britain for special preparatory studies before he begins on his work.

Revision work in the Nepali New Testament has also been started and a tentative edition of St. John's Gospel is about to come off the press.

*

Editions of the Sermon on the Mount in eight languages, totalling 600,000 copies, are being printed at the present time. They will be sold at one anna per copy. These editions are published by the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon with the help of the American Bible Society.

*

The organisation of Bible courses by correspondence is becoming an important feature of missionary work in India. Several organisations are making use of that type of evangelism. One of them, " Light of Life Bible Study Course," was started four-and-a-half years ago. It is a co-operative enterprise in which the World Gospel Crusade supplied Gospels of John which were sent out with each introductory lesson to serve as material for the course. The Scripture Gift Mission and other organisations contributed Gospel tracts and booklets. The Gideons provided English pocket Testaments to be given as awards to those who successfully completed the course in English.

The course is provided in nine of the main Indian languages, but the largest enrolment is in English. " To date about ten thousand, mostly from favoured classes of India, have completed this course," writes J. McNully in the last issue of *Floodtide* for 1953, the magazine of the Christian Literature Crusade.

Japan

Special Bible colportage campaigns were organised last summer in various parts of Japan. In three months six colporteurs covering the northern island of Hokkaido distributed about 70,000 copies of the Scripture. Four colporteurs were sent to the Toyoma Prefecture on the west coast—a Buddhist stronghold—where approximately 40,000 copies were sold. Two colporteurs visited the island of Hachijojima, a centre of ancient communal culture, selling about 2,000 copies.

The publication of the New Testament in Kogotai (everyday Japanese) will form one contribution on the part of the Japan Bible Society to the Third Jubilee celebrations. Other plans include the organisation of public rallies

in Tokio and Osaka, Bible exhibitions in leading department stores throughout the country, a series of lectures on the Bible, and a financial appeal with the target of Yen 5,000,000.

The Rev. T. Miyakoda, General Secretary of the Japan Bible Society, writing about the free Scripture distribution campaigns in Japan, gives the following information. These campaigns are a post-war feature in Japan and have to a large extent been made possible by the American occupation. Seven organisations are prominently engaged in this work.

The *Pocket Testament League* has circulated the largest quantity. By the end of 1952 that organisation had completed its 10 million distribution campaign of St. John's Gospel. This distribution took place independently of the activity of the Japan Bible Society.

The *Gideon's International* came to Japan in 1950 and a group of business men formed the first Gideon's camp that autumn in Tokio. In 1953 the organisation placed in hotels, hospitals and penal institutions over 90,000 bi-lingual New Testaments (Japanese-English), 15,000 New Testaments with Psalms and Proverbs, and 1,200 Picture New Testaments, all provided by the Japan Bible Society. Bi-lingual Testaments and Testaments with Psalms and Proverbs are also presented to University and High-school students.

Japan Youth for Christ staged an Evangelistic World Convention last summer which aimed at encouraging seekers to affiliate with the church of their area. That organisation circulated 200,000 Gospels of St. John in connection with their campaign.

Youth for Christ is also connected with the *Navigators*, an organisation active in the field of Bible correspondence courses. The first course is on St. John's Gospel; later courses cover the whole New Testament. These courses were started in 1951 and 30,000 Gospels and 5,000 Testaments have already been distributed.

The *International Walther League*, whose headquarters are in Chicago (U.S.A.) has a system of Bible distribution based on mailing Scriptures on behalf of an American donor to a Japanese friend. Over a period of two years, up to the autumn of this year, 2,500 Vest Pocket size Testaments were distributed.

The *Home Bible League* offers a free Testament to any home which has no copy and applies for it, pledging that it will be read. The League started in 1950 and 90,677 have since been distributed.

The *Oriental Mission Society* is the only organisation which was active in free Scripture distribution before the war. About 36 years ago they inaugurated an " Every Creature Crusade " and through a systematic distribution campaign, visited more than 10,000,000 homes of Japan, in each case leaving a free copy of the Gospel. Scripture distribution is linked with radio, car and tent evangelism, and the organisation claims that as a result of this activity, which includes the distribution of 700,000 copies during the last two years, 28 churches have already been established.

Finally the *Lutheran Hours News* (Missionary Synod) broadcasts religious and Bible programmes on 14 radio stations from Kyushu to Hokkaido, with some 60 million potential listeners. The broadcasting started in the autumn of 1951 and in two years 55,000 Bible correspondence courses have been mailed to interested listeners. The Lutheran Hours News works also in co-operation with the Home Bible League.

With the exception of the Pocket Testament League all these organisations get their supplies of Scripture from the Japan Bible Society. Colportage work of the Japan Bible Society is sometimes hampered by mass distribution of free copies of the Scripture. House to house distribution however still proves necessary, for it allows the personal contact which facilitates introducing the seekers to Christianity.

Korea

In Korea a successful pre-war project has been revived recently with a great deal of success. Children too poor for schools are organised into Bible Clubs where they have lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic. The Bible is the central textbook of their curriculum and they come together for three hours a day, five days a week. The programme for these children, whose ages range up to the middle teens, includes recreation and chapel services led by the young people. Since this instruction is carried on in " clubs " and not in schools, it is not subject to rigid government restrictions. To-day 9,000 boys and girls participate in Bible Clubs.

*

For the second time since the beginning of the Korean war the premises of the *Korean Bible Society* have been destroyed. On the first occasion the destruction occurred in Seoul during the course of the war ; now the new Bible depôt, opened over a year ago in Pusan, has been destroyed by fire which ravaged part of that over-crowded city at the end of November. The loss consisted of 300,000 copies of Scriptures, 1,700 reams of paper, plus furniture, documents and the books in the library. In addition five families who were living in the Bible House lost all their household goods. Fortunately part of the Society's stock was stored in two rented warehouse and this escaped destruction. The British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society at once voted grants-in-aid in order to make possible the production of new Scripture supplies immediately.

Liberia

Mr. and Mrs. Loren Nussbaum have accepted the A.B.S. Board's invitation to serve as agency secretary in Liberia and are sailing over to Africa early in 1954. The decision to open an agency in Liberia was taken after the visit paid by the Rev. P. Collyer in 1952 and after consultation with the B.F.B.S. Mr. and Mrs. Nussbaum have been working lately in Mexico on a translation project.

Mexico

Over nine million copies of the Scriptures (Bibles, New Testaments and portions) have been distributed in Mexico during the past 75 years by the American Bible Society's area agency. This is revealed in a report issued in connection with the agency's diamond jubilee celebrated last autumn. This record contrasts with that of the Roman Catholic Church, which distributed an estimated 2,000 copies of the Scriptures in this country during the 300 years of Spanish rule. Last year alone the agency put in circulation about 40,000 Bibles, 16,000 New Testaments and nearly 500,000 portions.

The main feature of the jubilee celebration was the colportage institute conducted for the agency's corps of 25 colporteurs representing a number of Protestant denominations. The morning sessions were devoted to a study of the task of the colporteur, introductory addresses being given by distinguished

laymen and clergy of Mexico. Each afternoon members of the Institute went through the streets and markets of the city, distributing the Scriptures. Evening sessions were open to the public and were held in the principal churches of the city. Speakers included outstanding clergy of Mexico and Secretary Molina of Cuba, as well as Secretary Holmgren of the American Bible Society, New York.

■

At the beginning, Scripture distributed in Mexico by Protestants was in the authorised Roman Catholic version of Scio de San Miguel, but without the customary notes and commentary. The work was begun in 1824 by John C. Brigham, a Congregationalist minister, and two or three others. Systematic distribution started in 1827 with the visit of James Thomson, an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to Mexico. For three years Thomson travelled throughout the country, finding Roman Catholic priests, nuns and friars among his most earnest customers and helpers. The first three corresponding members of the society there were Roman priests. One of them, José Maria Luis Mora, was active in national affairs and is considered the father of liberalism in Mexico. Although he remained a Roman Catholic and a priest, Mora volunteered to serve as a non-salaried agent of the British society and after growing and bitter opposition by the Roman hierarchy forced Thomson to leave the country. Then, when a pro-clerical government took over, Mora himself had to go into exile. It was only in 1863 that the B.F.B.S. was able to open an agency officially. That agency was handed over to the American Bible Society in 1879 after the latter had established its own agency.

Since then new laws have granted freedom of worship, and in 1950 an Advisory Council could be established for the purpose of integrating the Society's work more closely with the programme of the churches, to increase Scripture distribution and strengthen support of the agency. The work of Bible distribution has not always been easy in Mexico. Three colporteurs died a martyr's death—Florentino Pina in 1902, Feliciana Martiney in 1931 and Ricardo Garcia in 1952. Still, here as in other countries, the Bible continues to be the best-selling book.

Much of the encouraging advance in the last three years must be credited to the effective work of the Advisory Council. Scripture distribution since 1949 has advanced, as the figures given below indicate, by 270 per cent. :

1949	...	98,882	1951	...	239,284
1950	...	129,155	1952	...	465,417

Likewise, in 1952, the Mexican people by individual gifts and through 974 of their churches, representing 35 denominations, contributed 57,696.74 Mexican pesos, exceeding the goal set by the Council of 56,626 pesos. This was also the largest amount ever given in any one year, being more than twice the amount given in 1949.

The Advisory Council and Secretaries are emphasizing among the churches the following points : (1) that every church member and even the children should own their own Bibles, or at least a New Testament ; (2) that everybody should read and study his Bible ; (3) that every Christian home should have the daily family altar ; (4) that every Christian should carry his Bible to church ; (5) that every Christian should participate personally in active Scripture distribution, availing himself of every possible opportunity ; (6) that all local churches, with their pastors as leaders, should organize frequent Bible distribution campaigns in their communities (in the homes, stores, offices,

market places, factories, hospitals, military garrisons, prisons, etc.) ; (7) it is recommended that " Bible Sunday " be celebrated simultaneously on the date set by the Agency, which is the last Sunday in August ; (8) that the Bible Societies should be remembered frequently in prayer in behalf of their great work of translation, publication and distribution of the Holy Scriptures throughout the world.

Besides the above mentioned points the Agency Secretaries hope to be able : to enlarge and modernize the headquarters accommodation ; to increase the number of colporteurs to thirty and to have more special distributors on a commission basis ; to hold the Colporteurs' Institute every year rather than biannually ; to publish a monthly or bimonthly bulletin of the Agency, called " La Biblia en Mexico " ; to intensify the audio-visual promotional programme ; to secure the use of the radio not only to advertise the Society's work and promote the sale of the Scriptures, but to read selected Portions from the Bible without comment. It is also hoped that some time in the future it will be possible to organise a National Bible Society in Mexico.

Netherlands

The *Netherlands Bible Society* is working on various projects for the celebration in Holland of the 150th anniversary of Bible Society work. A publicity folder containing news on Bible work from various parts of the world and some notes on the Third Jubilee of the British and Foreign Bible Society has been issued. A mass rally is being prepared in den Haag for June 16th, 1954, to which various foreign delegates have also been invited. Special stamps have been issued in order to facilitate regular saving to meet the travel expenses involved.

The Netherlands Bible Society is also launching a membership drive, by which it is hoped to enrol 10,000 new members, bringing the total to 150,000. A special gift in the form of a Jubilee tile in Delft ware will be presented to all who introduce new members and supporters of the Society who contribute a total amount of Fl.25 for the funds of the Society. Another award will be made to those who secure Fl.10 for the Society in the same way (members pay a minimum of Fl.2.50 a year, " friends " a minimum of Fl.1).

The N.B.S. has also arranged a competition for one or more hymns on the Bible, with music. A poster and a Bible stamp, the latter using the same design as the tile, have also been issued to commemorate the Third Jubilee.

The Society plans to participate in the campaign of signatures for the World Book of Bible Sharers, and the Dutch television has agreed to show the film of the beginning of the campaign in the U.S.A. when President Eisenhower is to sign the book, on January 1st.

The Netherlands Bible Society is to assume responsibility for Bible work in the French and Dutch Guianas and the West Indies. These areas were formerly part of the B.F.B.S. West Indies Agency. The Alliance Biblique Française will also co-operate with the Dutch Society.

Norway

Plans are being made in Norway to launch a campaign for signatures for the American Bible Society's proposed World Book of Bible Sharers. This will be one of ways in which the Norwegian Bible Society intends to mark the Third Jubilee year. Special meetings will also take place next year all over the country.

Switzerland

In the Christmas message of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Switzerland to their members and congregations abroad, special emphasis is laid on the importance of Bible reading and study. " Our churches—those abroad as well as here at home—turn back to the Bible and to prayer more and more. We remember that it is just 500 years ago that the first Bible was printed. In many Swiss churches the commemoration of this event is seen as an opportunity to encourage a better understanding of the Bible. You too are invited to join this effort. When you read or hear the story of the Nativity in your home or in your church, remember to become a more faithful reader of the Bible . . . . . "

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Dr. Karl Lüthi-Tschanz, the well-known secretary of the Swiss National Library and an important Bible collector in Bern, wrote in his pamphlet " The Romansch Bible in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries " : " If Romansch is to continue as a language, a modern, popular edition of the Bible should exist. The written form of Romansch was established by the first Bible translation . . . . . If, in addition, the enthusiasm of the preachers in church and school grips the present-day generation, then the precious blessing of the Gospel will be established in the Romansch-speaking part of the world."

Karl Lüthi's hope has now been realised. The Romansch-speaking peoples of Upper and Lower Engadin, of Münstertal and Bergün, have come into possession of a new edition of the Bible. It will take the place of the translation so generously produced by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1870, which was sold out a long time ago. Pastor Filli of Valchava, Münstertal, translated the Old Testament, following closely the translation of the Zürich Bible, although with constant reference to the original texts. The books of the prophets in particular have been translated into a striking, often a poetic language. In doing this the translator has made a special contribution to our day. The MS. was continually revised and edited by individual pastors, until the copy was handed over to the printer.

Pastor Gaudenz in Zernez, who had translated the New Testament from the original, also revised the former translation, adopting a number of improvements. He also assumed a large share in the editing of the whole Bible. The new edition of 5,000 has been printed at the Engadin Press in Samaden and is sold at Frs.5 a copy. In addition to a preface the edition includes a one page chronological table, a list of Bible quotations for special occasions and four maps.

This price is only possible thanks to the many and in some cases large gifts that have been made by Cantonal churches, Bible Societies, local churches and individuals, and is sold at Frs.5 a copy.

*

A Bible campaign took place last October in the city of Geneva and neighbouring areas. The main emphasis was on the recall to the Bible. The form of the campaign varied from one locality to another according to circumstances and to available speakers. At regular meetings of parish organisations and groups during the month, special attention was paid to the Bible. Teachers of religion in day schools and Sunday schools were specially trained for a set of lessons to be given on the Bible. All evangelical religious papers devoted one of their October issues to the Bible. Two or three small Bible exhibitions were organised in church halls, and one main exhibition,

" The Bible, the Word of Life," which was shown in the Art Gallery, had to be extended because of public demand. The exhibition underlined the centrality of Jesus Christ in the message of the Bible, the centrality of biblical thought in many of the most beautiful expressions of art at all times, and the influence of the Bible in public life and social progress. Ancient copies of the Bible and Scriptures in various scripts were also exhibited.

A popular illustrated magazine of 16 pages on the Bible was issued for the campaign and met with unexpected success. 150,000 copies were printed, and re-prints in French and perhaps in German are contemplated. Many of the illustrations in this magazine were supplied by Bible Societies in other countries, including the Japan Bible Society. The contents stress, among other things, the importance of Bible translation, production and distribution throughout the world and the responsibility of every Christian to recognise and assume its share in this ministry.

A mass meeting was also organised in the Reformation Hall, one of the two largest halls in the city, and was attended by a packed audience. Almost all non-Roman denominations were represented on the platform.

Speakers during the campaign had been invited from various parts of Switzerland and neighbouring countries and the General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES had a week of speaking engagements in connection with the campaign.

It is hoped that this campaign will also result in a more definite and active interest on the part of Christians in Geneva in the spreading of the Scriptures and in a recovery of activity on the part of the Geneva Bible Society, which largely supported colportage work in France in the past.

The Philippines

The production of Scripture in Manila has continued in various Philippine dialects ; the following portions printed were in 1953 : the Gospel of John in Cebuano, Pampangan, Panayan; the Gospel of Luke in Pampangan and Panayan; the Gospel of Matthew in Ibanag. The total circulation in 1953 rose to 146,980 copies as against 84,017 in 1952.

*

The Rev. G. H. Waterman, A.B.S. associate translation secretary, paid his first visit abroad on behalf of the Society by visiting the Philippines. The Advisory Council of the Agency in Manila has asked the American Bible Society to allow him to return to the Philippines in order to supervise several major translation projects to be undertaken during the next two or three years. In his first visit, secretary Waterman had co-operated with several translators now at work in the Philippines.

*

A drive for the recruiting of Bible Society members was inaugurated last autumn by the Rev. W. H. Fonger, the Bible Society agent in the Philippines.

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It has been the usual practice in the A.B.S. to receive orders from individuals or churches in the States for Scriptures to be delivered to individuals or churches in foreign countries. For the first time the process has been reversed by a Filipino calling at the Bible House and paying $12.50 for the delivery of Gospels of John to a minister in Los Angeles, California. The latter will decide in what languages the Scripture should be supplied.

Thailand

Thai New Testaments have been placed in all the provincial libraries of the country. Many letters of appreciation have been received, and some asked for further information about the Christian Scriptures.

United States

The tenth annual campaign of Worldwide Bible Reading took place at the end of last year. Just as Mary Jones provided the spark which kindled the Bible Society movement, so it is the letter of a lonely Marine in the South West Pacific Ocean to his mother, wishing his parents to join him in the daily reading of identical passages of their Bibles, that initiated the movement called Worldwide Bible Reading in 1953. Although the *American Bible Society* publishes lists of Bible readings throughout the year, the campaign itself is concentrated on the last weeks of the year, from thanksgiving day to Christmas, with particular emphasis on Universal Bible Sunday, the second Sunday in December.

It is thought by some that the unprecedented sales of Scriptures by commercial publishers and Bible Societies in the United States in the last five years have been stimulated by the response to Worldwide Bible Reading.

President Eisenhower accepted the honorary chairmanship of the sponsoring committee of this year's campaign and sent a message of encouragement to the American Bible Society for the opening of the campaign.

In ten years, 2,700,000 posters have been issued (different each year) 152 million bookmarks giving the list of passages. The number of lists published through reprints in religious magazines or papers is estimated at 375 millions. In 1953 nearly 170,000 pastors and chaplains were mailed samples of materials and given the opportunity to order without charge additional supplies for their local observances of World Bible Reading and Universal Bible Sunday. Daily readings from the Scriptures have also been given throughout the country from 92 television stations.

*

The American Bible Society has published nearly one and a half million copies of the Gospel of St. Matthew, under the title " Good Tidings of Great Joy " to be used as a " Christmas card." The colourful red and green cover shows the " Star " shining down upon the city of Bethlehem.

A similar Gospel has been published in Spanish, to the extent of 300,000 copies for Latin America, but the edition was smaller than the demand.

Over 900,000 " Easter Gospels " were sold in the U.S.A. in the Spring of 1953.

When the nation-wide Bible observances were held in some 3,000 communities on September 30th, 1952, on the occasion of the publication of the American Revised Standard Version, there was a great upsurge of enthusiasm. From hundreds of local communities ever since there have come requests for assistance in local projects to stimulate the use and understanding of the Scriptures. In order to help answer these many inquiries, a five-year programme on a regional basis, has been begun under the aegis of a new Committee on the Use and Understanding of the Bible, in the National Council's Division of Christian Education. Seven regional directors of the nation-wide effort are to be appointed.

They will all work closely with area denominational leaders, with state and local councils of churches and religious education, state and local councils of church women and with ministerial associations on Bible-centred projects in hundreds of communities.

*

In one year, 2,500,000 copies of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible have been sold. Such a large first-year sale has never been equalled in the history of commercial publishing. Sales of the King James Version have likewise greatly increased.

*

A conference of District and Divisional Secretaries of the American Bible Society (responsible for Bible distribution in the U.S.A.) was held last September at Augusta, Georgia. Ben Smith, of the Southern District, explained in detail the techniques he applied in his district-wide house-to-house distribution which has resulted in the circulation of 1,152,000 Scriptures in 1951, 1,338,000 in 1952 and certainly well over 1 million in 1953. It was suggested that similar methods might be employed by others in the States and abroad.

*

The American Bible Society has just completed a film on the history of the Bible. It is a 50 minute film based on a scenario prepared by Dr. E. North. It is hoped that the film will be ready for release about March ; both 35mm, as well as 16mm. versions will be available. The film is intended for showing in public cinemas as well as religious gatherings. Dr. North himself spent over two months co-operating with the professionals in the studios in Bronx.

*

King Paul of Greece called at the Bible House in New York on November 25th to express the thanks of the Greek people for the Scriptures provided by the Bible Society. Since the war the joint agency of the A.B.S. and B.F.B.S. in Greece has distributed 1,695,343 volumes of Scriptures, of which 227,602 were New Testaments for the Greek Army.

Venezuela

A " Liaison committee " has been called together in order to foster closer relations between the Bible Society agency and the churches in Venezuela. The committee, which is interdenominational, will also be used in an advisory capacity by the Secretary of the Agency.

*

October was Bible month in Venezuela and permission was obtained for broadcasting from one radio station in Caracas, four half-hour programmes dealing with the Bible. The granting of such permission is a departure from the usual policy. Only in Maracaibo had it been possible in recent years to do any Christian broadcasting.

*

The Orinoco River Mission working in the Orinoco River Valley, East Venezuela, has undertaken a Scripture distribution programme aiming at placing a Gospel in every home of the Valley. The distribution is free. About 50,000 Gospels a year are needed and the campaign is expected to last about 4 years. Efforts are made also to follow up the Scripture distribution with evangelistic programmes and church buildings. As the Bible Society agency has no colporteurs in that area, it has helped the effort by granting 150,000 free Gospels to the mission.